

SHORT STORIES

A WEEKLY
MAGAZINE FOR HOME AND TRAIN

No. 624.

FOR WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 15TH, 1900.

[ONE PENNY.]

WORTH A GUINEA A BOX.

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LOOK
WELL**

These family favourites are composed entirely of Medicinal Herbs, and are warranted free from mercury or other Poisonous substance. They can harm no one, and may be given to children or to the aged and infirm with perfect safety. They cleanse the stomach and bowels and purify the blood; invigorate the whole nervous system, and give tone and energy to the muscles.

BEECHAM'S PILLS have stood the test of over fifty years without the publication of testimonials. Parents recommend them to their children. Friends recommend them to one another, and BEECHAM'S PILLS recommend themselves.

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WELL**

**AND
KEEP
WELL**

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20,000 LARGE TRIAL BOTTLES OF TATCHO
to enable those who have not yet profited by Mr. G. R. Sims' discovery, to have the opportunity of doing so. The Company does this in the belief that such distribution will enable the preparation to become more widely known, and will introduce it to every home in a far more satisfactory manner than through unlimited puffing by advertisement.

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S.S.

Dec. 15, 1900.

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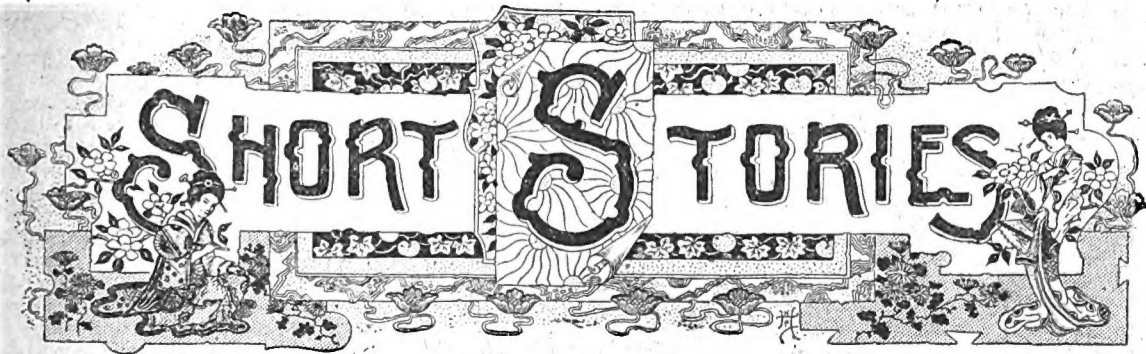
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No. 624.]

For the Week Ending December 15th, 1900.

[ONE PENNY.]

THE CRAZY AUNT.

"Vingt minutes d'arrêt!"

The train for England drew up at Amiens station, bringing to an end a painful talk between two people in a first-class carriage.

"The long and the short of it is, Lilla, you will have to put this nonsense out of your head," said Captain Jones, as he opened the door.

He was a good-looking man, with stern eyes and a determined jaw.

He might have been at least a dozen years older than his sister, who, however, had defended herself through a course of bullying all the way from Paris.

"You had better come and have some luncheon."

"No," she said, "I don't want any."

"Don't be a goose."

"I'm not hungry. I would rather stay here."

Under any other circumstances Captain Jones would have stuck to his point till he had gained it. But in this case it would have meant losing his own luncheon, so he shrugged his shoulders and walked away with the stream of passengers towards the buffet.

Lilla sat quite still in her place. She was a girl of twenty, and might have been a pretty girl if her features and expression had been a little less decided. Her eyes were remarkable—large, blue, and grave, with straight brows and dark lashes. She was pale, but her complexion was clear and good. Sometimes, when she was amiable, she did look very pretty, and at all times she was handsome. She was plainly dressed, and her manner was cool and straightforward.

Just now she looked anything but happy; paler and graver than usual, frowning slightly and sadly, as she sat alone by the carriage window and gazed across the lines at the crowded station. She could see her brother's broad shoulders disappearing into the buffet, and thought, as she watched him, how horribly disagreeable he was. As if a woman of twenty might not decide for herself! Just personal prejudice, and nothing more. He was so narrow-minded; he thought everybody ought to be made on his own pattern. What could be more ridiculous!

Some sort of dininess—a dimness of vexation—clouded Lilla's eyes as she thought of the long, weary argument she had just gone through. Of course, she was not weak-minded enough to cry; but it is terribly

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hopeless work trying to convince one's brother, or even to make him understand that one means to have one's own way. After about five minutes of peace, and a strange stillness, for the train was nearly empty, Lilla was startled from her thoughts by a voice from the platform below.

"May I ask if this carriage is full?"

She looked out and saw an elderly woman, carrying a bag and some shawls. Her voice was breathless and very tired, but there was a curious charm in it, a high sweet tone, and as she lifted anxious eyes to Lilla a very pretty smile lighted up her pale, delicate face. She was extremely well-dressed, but looked a little dishevelled. Lilla wondered instinctively what she had done with her maid.

With the unaffected readiness which belonged to her, she instantly made the stranger welcome, took her bag and shawls, helped her to climb into the carriage, and thought with satisfaction how disappointed Percy would be, when he came back, to find that his brotherly scoldings could not go on in peace all the way to Boulogne.

"Oh, thank you, how very kind you are!" said the stranger, looking earnestly at Lilla and smiling sweetly. "This is delightful. I thought I should never get away from that odious place, and the train seemed so full. There is room for me here, really?" looking round at Percy's scattered belongings with a touch of alarm.

"Yes; there is only my brother," said Lilla.

"How providential! What a place this is to get away from! I never stopped here before; but something happened yesterday in Paris which put me out dreadfully, and I felt too ill, and too cross, to start early in the morning, so I came as far as Amiens in the afternoon. Such a stupid thing to do! I had to leave my poor maid in Paris; she was ill—left her with a friend, you know—and then my—well my escort disappointed me, and I couldn't sleep last night—and really, do you know, that ever since this train came in I have been wandering up and down trying to find a compartment."

"It is full. I don't know how we managed to get one to ourselves," said Lilla.

"The officials were really very stupid. I thought one was going to help me. I asked him to find me a carriage"

First he wanted to put me into the *Dames seules*, which is a thing I can't endure; and then he opened a door where a man was smoking, and when I declined that he shrugged his shoulders and waved his hands—*Voilà le*



"Oh, thank you, how very kind you are," said the stranger.

train! Madame peut choisir! So I struggled along the platform, actually got into one or two empty carriages and out again, because they were so full. No, I am not Irish," she said laughing, as she perceived a smile about Lilla's mouth. "They were full of bags—don't you see?"

"Yes, I see perfectly," said Lilla.

"Now, I ought to be very thankful," said the stranger, and she became silent for a few minutes, leaning back in her corner, watching Lilla with her bright expressive eyes, which seemed much younger than her pale face, marked with lines of pain and age. At a little distance, her slight figure, her eyes and manner, made her look less than forty; she was in reality near sixty.

Lilla was not a very talkative girl. After doing what she could for the lonely lady, and listening with sufficient politeness to her history, she fell back into her own grave silence, and watched the platform till she saw Percy coming back.

The stranger thought, "What a severe face! The girl is unhappy, I believe; but I like her, too. Now that is the sort of girl—"

Captain Jones's arrival at the door disturbed these meditations. He hesitated a moment, while his sister looked at him gravely. Then he said, "Give me my coat and things, will you? I am going to smoke," and he took himself off to another carriage.

When he was gone, the strange lady began again to talk to Lilla, who, in spite of herself, had to respond to these advances. There was something very pleasant,

though, not very wise, about her companion, who chattered of France and Paris, and abused England, and said a great many things that Lilla totally disagreed with.

In theory, this strong and sensible girl could not have imagined herself enduring the talk of a woman like this. It was exactly the kind of woman she disliked and despised—a silly, vain, affected, self-conscious chatter-box, much too young for her age, and altogether ridiculous. This was Lilla's charitable judgment. She would not confess to herself that there was a mysterious something in the stranger which redeemed all this; but the time went on, and she found that she must meet those quick, kind eyes, and smile in answer to that smile, and, in fact, be conquered by such a sunny presence as she did not at present count among her friends. What was it? What was it? Why was she obliged to give her sympathy, and even, worse and worse, later on, her confidence, to a foolish, weak-minded, accidental companion like this?

"Oh yes, many of the French manners and customs are most superior to ours," said this lady, talking so fast that Lilla—English to the backbone—could not contradict her. "Their marriages, for instance—how sensible they are! and how happy!"

"No, horrible. I can't bear them!" exclaimed Lilla; but her companion hardly seemed to hear this.

"Of course," she said, "people's friends and relations must know them better than they know themselves. Well, what a comfort not to be allowed to throw themselves away on the first person they take a fancy to. Oh, dear, what nonsense. Two silly children with a penny binding themselves down to a life of misery, finding out too late that they don't suit each other in the least. And if they were French everything would be arranged easily and carefully—money and all the rest of it. Frenchmen never make fools of themselves. I wish my nephew was a Frenchman!"

She said this half to herself, and sighed. Then she looked at Lilla, "Yes," she said, "I am in great trouble."

Lilla was looking at her with an earnest interest which was certainly encouraging. There was a kind of wistfulness in her eyes, and she said, "But one's relations don't know what is best for one, I am quite sure of that."

"Well," said the lady after a pause, smiling very prettily, "if I happened to be your grandmother I think we should disagree about that. However, we all speak from our own experience. Now I have a nephew, who at this moment is driving me quite mad by his detestable obstinacy. He has fallen in love with some girl I never saw or heard of, and wants to marry her at once. Now, listen. It is really a relief to me to tell somebody, and I'm sure you are sympathising and kind."

Lilla shook her head a little, but the stranger smiled and went on. "I don't want to boast of what I have done for Jack, but I must tell you, that you may judge between us. He has never had any money, and never will have any, except what I give him. I paid for his education, which was an utter farce from beginning to end. He never passed a single examination, failed in everything he tried for, simply from idleness, for I don't think he is a fool. Idleness, ingratitude, selfishness. Now he coolly tells me that he is going to be married, and, of course, expects me to support his wife as well as himself, for she has nothing. Some stray girl he met abroad, no doubt as odious as English girls abroad generally are. Our tempers are neither of them sweet,

and I must tell you that Jack and I were very angry with each other. He declared that he expected nothing from me, which was utter falsehood and nonsense. So we wished each other good-bye. He may go his way, and I shall go mine. I shall certainly do nothing more for him, and I think he knows it. As to my money, it shall go to somebody who deserves it."

She looked Lilla straight in the face as she spoke. There certainly was something very strange and unusual in this outpouring from an utter stranger. In theory, there was nothing that Lilla disliked more; she hated effusive people, who talked of their own concerns, and thought they must interest everybody. But here was a contradiction. This woman's talk really interested Lilla. She listened attentively to every word; odd little thrills seemed to run through her as the story went on; her eyes deepened, and a faint colour rose to her pale cheeks. Lilla was at her prettiest now, and the stranger, looking at her, almost forgot her own troubles in admiration.

"What do you think?" she said, after a minute's silence. "I am right, am I not?"

"I don't know," said Lilla, with much more hesitation than was usual with her. "You couldn't expect, could you, that your nephew would give up the girl if they really cared for each other? Perhaps she is a much nicer girl than you think."

"Oh, no, no, I don't believe it. Of course, he says she is lovely. He wanted to show me her photograph, but I wouldn't look at it. But don't you understand, even if she were an angel he has no business to think of marrying at all. And he has engaged himself without even the politeness of consulting me. Well, as I tell him, but I know you think him wrong, which is very amiable of you. You would never forget all your duties and principles in that sort of way."

"Yes, indeed I should, I do," said Lilla quickly, with a sudden blush. "My brother thinks me just as bad—just as obstinate and ungrateful, as you think your nephew."

"Then I am sure your brother is mistaken." The stranger spoke as quickly and decidedly as Lilla herself, but with such a look and tone of kindly sweetness that Lilla suddenly moved from her own place, and sat down beside her. Almost directly her new friend took her hand, and held it while they talked together. This sympathy, so strangely met, brought Lilla's troubles rushing to her lips and eyes. She had no mother, no kind, foolish aunt, no one but a married elder sister, from whom she expected nothing but blame. Percy thought she had been making a terrible fool of herself, and the world in general was sure to agree with him.

She told her fellow-traveller that she and Percy had been in the south of France, and had there met a young man sketching, who meant to be an artist. They had seen a great deal of him, and at last one day—Lilla did not enter much into her version of the old story, though, no doubt, like other people, she thought it was quite different from that of everybody else and far more interesting. But her few words were quite as touching, quite as effective, as other people's sentimental histories. There was a kind of simple genius about Lilla, which her brother called "being stupidly different from other girls."

Lilla's lover had no money; he had no profession; but he was extremely, brilliantly clever, drew beautifully, and was sure to be a great artist some day. He seemed to think that some relations might help

him a little just at first, and Lilla thought her brother Percy, who was unmarried and well off, might do the same for her. But Percy took a very different view of the subject. He did not at all share his sister's faith in the artist's future; he wanted her to marry a friend of his own, who admired her. Percy, in fact, was not at all kind about it.

"Percy wants me to write to him, and tell him—but no, that I never will do," said Lilla, sadly and strongly. "I see we shall have to wait for years. I told him I thought so. He didn't seem to think so—but anyhow, he knows it will make no difference to me."

"Is he good-looking?" asked her fellow-traveller.

"Oh—yes!" said Lilla. She might have been talking of the Apollo Belvedere.

"And he paints well, does he?"



"At last one day—"

"Yes, indeed—such lovely landscapes. And he has only begun quite lately."

"He has a spark of genius, no doubt; that makes all the difference," said the stranger.



The visitor was coming in.

In spite of her beating heart and her heavy eyelids, Lilla could hardly help laughing at her friend's inconsistency.

"Give in! Oh, no," said she. "But I am afraid you are much more hopeful than I am."

"We shall see. In the meantime will you give me your address?"

"Yes; thank you so much. I do hope we shall meet again."

Lilla hastily pulled a letter out of her pocket. Then

Jack thinks he can draw, I believe. He told me one day that he could make money by his sketches. Of course I laughed at him."

So they went on talking as their train hurried through France.

Lilla could hardly believe, afterwards, that she had actually told all her history and poured out her whole heart to a person she had never met in her life before; but then this was such a wonderful person. She began to realise what she had done when they saw the sand hills and the sea, and then rushed on to Boulogne through the green *bruyères* and the fir trees.

"I ought not to have talked like this—but you have been so very kind, and I really am unhappy," she said.

Then the strange woman took her hand again.

"My dear, you must not be unhappy. Trust me, and don't be unhappy. I think I see a way out of your troubles—only don't give in, whatever you do."

she coloured a little and hesitated. Then she took the letter out of the envelope and gave the envelope to her friend, saying half-aloud, "I have no other."

Looking at the letter in her hand, and putting it back in a safe place, she missed the first expression on her friend's face, which was that of extreme astonishment, almost anger, quickly succeeded by intense amusement.

"Miss Lilla Jones!" she read out, in such an extremely odd voice that Lilla was startled.

"Is there anything wrong?" she said.

"No, my dear, nothing. Only your direction in the South of France is not of much use to me."

"Oh, I'm so sorry. Please give it me back. I can find a scrap of paper, I daresay."

"No, no; I like this. Write your English address on it—there's plenty of room."

"And—may I have yours?" asked Lilla, when she had obeyed.

"No, it doesn't matter about me. You shall hear from me. We shall know all about each other in time. Here we are. Thank you for a miserable journey turned into a happy one."

"You have comforted me very much," said Lilla gratefully; but she was rather at a loss to understand her friend's meaning. The happiness of the journey, to all seeming, had only consisted in having the knowledge of another person's troubles added to her own.

* * * * *

Jack, as his aunt, Mrs. Lindsay, always called him—this was only a pet name, the world in general knowing him as Reginald Carr—was very much surprised at receiving a kind letter from his aunt a few days after she had cast him off for ever. The beginning of the letter was kind, at least; the latter part seemed totally unreasonable.

Jack was staying on at the hotel in Paris, where he had come on purpose to meet his aunt, and to break the news of his engagement. From former experience he had quite expected that his aunt, after storming a little, would kiss him and give her consent. He was then going to take her back to England, where his further plans would soon arrange themselves. But her horrid obstinacy had knocked everything on the head.

Jack did not know what to do with himself, and so for the present was finding a little amusement in Paris. He was very painfully conscious that he could not marry on nothing. At the same time he could not possibly give up the girl with whom he was so much in love. He was furiously angry with his aunt.

In this letter she invited, or rather, ordered him to come to London at once, naming a particular day and hour when she desired to see him. She went on to say that she had met the person to whom she intended to leave all her money. "But there is still a loophole for you," she wrote. "You do not deserve anything at all, but come here at once, and we shall see whether we understand each other any better than we did."

"Hang the old woman, and her money! What on earth does she mean?" said Jack, with other exclamations of the same kind. "She's mad. I wish she and her money had never been heard of. It's too bad, to bring a fellow up to expect a thing, and then disappoint him after all. Who has she picked up now, I wonder! One of the Lindsays? I'll be hanged if I go. I'd require to pack at once."

He did go, however, not being quite such a proud and rash young man as he supposed himself, having also a private reserve of love and respect for his aunt,

however ungrateful his words and thoughts might be—but he went in a very bad temper. He left his luggage, which was immense, at Charing Cross Station, and drove in a hansom to his aunt's house, not being sure whether she meant him to stay with her. She said nothing about that, but received him kindly and gave him luncheon, for he had arrived early in the day, according to the sudden and queer request.

There was something very odd about the old lady. Jack, who was inclined just then to take a dark view of all things, thought she was going out of her mind. She looked at him in such a curious way, and said funny things which he could not really laugh at. She moved about constantly and was in the highest spirits, while he sat slouching and looking down; his eyes were hollow and his face was red after a windy crossing.

"Did anybody ever think you good-looking, Jack?" asked Mrs. Lindsay.

"How should I know?" said the young man.

"Not a fair question, is it? I ought to ask somebody else. Well, you have told me nothing about your journey. Was it rough? Had you pleasant companions?"

"Yes, awfully rough. Don't know; didn't look at them; they were Frenchmen, mostly. By-the-bye, how did you get on?"

"Ah, by-the-bye! the first time I ever travelled from Paris alone. Well, I stopped at Amiens, you know—a great mistake; and yet it wasn't. I believe it was one of the best things I ever did in my life."

"How was that?" said Jack, trying to seem interested.

"Well, from Amiens to Boulogne—on to London, in fact—I had the most charming fellow-traveller. She helped me, she took care of me, she did everything for me; she told me all her history, and we became friends for life. I found that there was only one thing she wanted to make her happy, and I determined that she should have it."

"What?" said Jack, suspiciously. He guessed what was coming now, and thought himself most abominably treated. Not even one of the Lindsays, her husband's relations! but an accidental woman picked up in a railway carriage! Some sharp designing creature, who had got round his aunt and made a fool of her. It was no surprise when Mrs. Lindsay answered his question—"Plenty of money."

Jack threw himself back in his chair. He tried to look as if this was nothing to him; but scowled hideously at a picture over the chimney-piece.

"It's a common complaint, and a difficult cure," he said. "Well, go on, Aunt Fanny. Is she French or English, young or old?"

"English, young, and very pretty," said his aunt. "At least, I am sure you would say so."

"I bet you I shouldn't," replied Jack. "I haven't that desperate admiration for every girl I meet."

"I know that—but I know the sort of thing you do admire. Now, Jack, suppose you and I have a bet on the subject. Ten pounds, if you like."

"No thank you, I can't afford it," said Jack smiling grimly. "Besides, I'm not likely to see her, unless she has taken up her abode with you. And you can't expect me to like the notion of her—particularly."

"I am sorry for you, Jack, really," said Mrs. Lindsay. "But it is all your own fault. I have made up my mind, and I can't change it now."

"No, so it seems," said Jack, getting up and shrug-

ging his shoulders. "Why didn't you let me stay in Paris?"

"A very bad place for you. Besides, as I have told you, there is a loophole. I will give you another chance."

"What's that?"

"You may marry her," said Mrs. Lindsay abruptly; and then she went to the other end of the room, and stood there fidgeting with some flowers, turning her back to her nephew.

Jack stood on the hearthrug with his hands in his pockets. First he laughed, an unflattering laugh to Mrs. Lindsay's new favourite; then he said. "Did you really send for me from Paris to tell me that, Aunt Fanny?"

For a moment she seemed to misunderstand him in some way. She turned round quickly with an exclamation on her lips—"You don't—" but then she stopped herself as quickly, for poor Jack looked both angry and dejected. "Well, you need not be scornful," she said. "My friend is very much too good for you. How do you know that she would have you, after all?"

"I don't see how you know it, either," he said. "But she won't be asked, so it doesn't matter."

"Look here, my dear Jack. You are ruining yourself; you are losing your last chance. The fact is simply this. If you marry anyone but this friend of mine I won't leave you a penny. You may go your own way; you may go to the dogs if you like."

"Thank you, I will," said Jack. He walked towards the door, but then he turned round again and faced his aunt, looking extremely grave.

The conviction had come to him that she really must be going out of her mind. She had always been an odd woman, with a peculiar temper and a great many fancies; but she now seemed to be something really too extraordinary. Jack, who was a thoroughly honest fellow, with all his faults, was grieved and shocked at her unaccountable behaviour. In former days she had always been kind, generous, and honourable. Now she seemed quite heartless. There she stood, almost laughing, giving him the alternative between total ruin and the most blackguardly, scoundrelly behaviour. An evil spirit appeared to have entered into her.

"You can't mean it, Aunt Fanny!" he said. "I have told you who I mean to marry, and you can't possibly expect me to change my mind. If I have to work hard for her, very well, I can and I will. We shall not be dependent on you."

"Then we understand each other. You refuse my offer. Go and work, then. You are a Vicar Cole in miniature, I believe," said Mrs. Lindsay. "We need not be anxious about you."

"I don't understand your offer," said Jack, taking no notice of this unkind remark.

He was flushed and very angry; to himself the poor fellow seemed to be in the midst of a whirl of mocking faces. His one wish now was to get away, and he turned to the door again. Just then came a visitor's knock.

"Here she is," said Mrs. Lindsay. "I asked her to come and see me this afternoon. Well, Jack, then you have quite made up your mind; you won't marry her? Perhaps it was too much to expect. Don't rush out of that door; you will meet her. Go out this way, into the study; wait there for ten minutes, and then come back to me. I should like you to see her, though, of course, my plan won't do."



They did not meet at all as strangers.

"I don't want to see her. I'll go off at once, thank you."

"Jack, do me this last favour. You need not stay in the room. You need only come in and say good-bye to me, if you like. You may be just as rude and sulky as you please—but I want you to see her. Go!"

Jack fled, for the visitor was coming in. It was Miss Lilla Jones. She looked very pretty, and very well-dressed. Mrs. Lindsay received her with eager kindness, and after thanking her many times for coming, began to talk seriously.

"I have been thinking a great deal about you," she said, "since we parted, and if you will let me, I am going to speak very plainly. First of all, my dear, it will never do for you to marry a poor man."

Lilla smiled, coloured, and looked at her rather sadly.

"Your brother is perfectly right, you know. It is a dreadful look-out for you. Now listen to me, I told you in the train the other day how much I liked French marriages, and how wise I thought them. Do you remember? Well, now I have taken it into my head to arrange a marriage for you—one to which your brother can't possibly object. I want you to give up all your wild ideas, and to be very good and sensible, and to

make me and all your friends very happy—by marrying my nephew."

Lilla's face fell in a wonderful manner. She stared at Mrs. Lindsay in blank astonishment, and the only thought that crossed her mind was, "Poor dear thing, she is crazy!" She began to wish herself safe out of the house, was in fact a little frightened, and did not in the least know what to say.

"But you know—I told you—" she stammered out. "I thought you understood—"

"I understood perfectly," said Mrs. Lindsay smiling. "But I have just been talking to my nephew. I told him that he must give up all his nonsensical ideas, and offer himself to you. My dear, if you will marry him I will leave him all my money, and allow him fifteen hundred a year now. If you won't I intend to cut him off with a shilling, and I think in that case I shall leave everything to you. There's only one difficulty."

"More than one, I should think—but what is the one?" asked Lilla, as quietly as she could.

"He declares he will have nothing to do with you. He will not give up that girl he met in France. But I think, when he sees you—"

"Please, Mrs. Lindsay, don't let us have any more talk like this," said Lilla, getting up, with scarlet cheeks and eyes shining with surprise and anger. "You can't be serious in anything you are saying. You can't mean it—but your whole plan is perfectly impossible. How could I accept your money—a perfect stranger; and as to—I never heard such extraordinary things in my life."

"So Jack seemed to think," said Mrs. Lindsay, coolly. "You take my proposal very much in the same way that he did, poor boy!"

"Did you think that either of us could possibly consent to it?" asked Lilla, her blue eyes so dark and flashing that Mrs. Lindsay looked at her with admiration. "Besides, you astonish me. Don't you remember telling me not to give in? I have really hoped, all this time—you were so kind on the journey."

Lilla's voice failed a little. She bit her lips, and her eyes suddenly softened. It was too evident she was going to cry. The pain, the disappointment, the almost insult from a person in whose kindness she had trusted, were too much for her, added to her former troubles.

Mrs. Lindsay watched her for a moment, and an odd convulsion passed over her face, too. Then she got up, came across to the girl, took her face between her hands and kissed her, looking at her with such happy, loving eyes that Lilla's tears were checked.

"I really am fiendish," said Mrs. Lindsay, and she sprang across to the door, opened it, and called Jack.

He came slowly forward from the study.

"Come in, Jack," said his aunt. "Here is my friend. You need not be at all afraid of meeting her; she will have nothing whatever to say to you, and I have told her that you are in exactly the same state of mind towards her. But you both think you have to do with an old madwoman, so please indulge her last fancy by shaking hands. Oh no, Jack, no! You are forgetting yourself. This is disgraceful."

For Jack cried out, "Lilla!" and Lilla gave a little scream and they did not meet at all as strangers, but as lovers long parted, while Mrs. Lindsay, whose remonstrances were useless, walked away smiling to the window.

ELEANOR C. PRICE.

BELOW THE SURFACE.

A Tragedy of Earl's Court.

THE Welsh Orchestra finished its last item in the Empress Theatre with a rush. The crowd of saunterers lounged on round the ring. As the

music died down a sudden arresting of divided attention took place.

Pure and sweet above the steady "trappe, trappe" of the crowd and the light arguments of the merits of this or that group, soared out a woman's lovely voice. For a moment or two it was difficult to see where the music came from, and then I pushed my way through the people going all ways, till I found myself craning my neck over the heads of others who had arrived first and in front of the group containing the singer. The singer had her face turned away from me, and all I could see was little more than that she was probably beautiful. She had an almost olive skin, and that lovely but not aggressively black hair possessed by Southern Europeans.

I turned and verified my guess—the name descriptive of the group was Italy. As the song continued the girl, barely more than twenty, turned her full face to the audience taking little notice of them. The song seemed to draw her very soul. From cheering trills to the wailings of a love-lorn soul, the music changed; and one felt insensible to all save the real sorrow of a young life. She seemed to sue for pity from the lightly-come pleasure seekers, anon to implore Heaven's help in vengeance for her soul's pain.

I could not move; the girl's whole being seemed to permeate the crowd. Men stood agape, and when the last verse came with its exquisite harmony of anguish, one feared to move lest a visible vengeance should follow.

Then with a snapping of the tension the applause rang out. The girl sat down near the back of the stage, and—it was not mere fancy—real tears of anguish glistened in those dark eyes.

The crowd would not be satisfied: a man came up behind me; the crowd increased though the song was over. The girl rose and came forward. The clapping and cheering increased. But she did not intend to sing again. She bowed towards each corner of the crowd. Then, as she inclined to my side, a startling change came over the girl's face. Every bit of colour fled, and with what was apparently an effort to reach

out over the heads of the crowd, she fell prone on the stage. At the same moment I was pushed aside by the man who arrived just as the song finished.

"Heavens! it's Pianita!" was his whispered ejaculation as the girl's face was turned full towards us.

No one apparently heard him but myself. My attention was centred for a second on the girl, who was at once attended to by someone of the audience. I had the impression that my neighbour on the first impulse began to push through towards the stage. His second thoughts, however, made him turn away. No one but myself had seen what was evidently a mutual recognition.

But the man had seen that I had noticed it. He was a young man, a well-set Englishman of a good type. A look of genuine concern came over his face for the moment. The crowd soon dispersed on finding the girl was being cared for, and we two were left alone.

"That was curious, wasn't it?" he said, casually. "I knew her once."

And we got into conversation. He was not very communicative, but I was quick to gather that these two in the South had been parties to what he said were very trivial love passages. But I could not believe that, and I felt instinctively that even if the chapter had been but a mere passing detail in his life, it had meant more, if not absolutely everything, to the girl. And I felt sorry for her accordingly, though I felt even in the short conversation we had that he was quite sincere in his belief that she had just such a light feeling.

We strolled round the Exhibition grounds for half-an-hour or so while he told me his tale. We became quite friendly—he was evidently of an ingenuous, confiding nature—and the girl had interested me to such an extent that I listened keenly to his story.

As time went on we decided to go round and ask for the girl. He had no compunction, and I willingly accompanied him. We went. An attendant took in our message and we soon found ourselves waiting in a little reception room at the back of the Theatre. "The Signora would come," the attendant said. She moreover added that the girl had not recovered long, and was very poorly still. I waited, at his request. In a moment or two she entered. No name had been given, but she knew whom to expect, and as soon as she saw him rushed forward with extended arms.

The look in her eyes when she first saw him was sufficient to tell me what the meeting meant to her. Oh! that it meant the same to him!

"*Carissimo mio!*" she cried, and buried herself in his arms.

He gently put her aside. "Well, Pianita, this is funny. Fancy you in England! Why are you here?"

She opened her dark eyes a little. "Why what do you think, *caro mio*? To see my——"

He looked a little astonished. "Not to see me, Pianita, surely? That will never do, you know."

She drew away from him, but her whole soul was in her glance.

"Why, surely," she said; "I couldn't live always without——"

He saw it was more serious than he had anticipated. He almost appealed to me. I stood by all the time. No opportunity had been given to notice my presence, and she was far too much entranced at seeing him to mind a stranger. The tale seemed to unfold itself to me with more than a touch of sadness.

"Well," he said, "I'm staying in town for a day or two. Come and see me in the Warwick Road"—giving the number of the house—"I am up here alone, for you know"—playfully pointing a finger at her—"I'm a married man, and my——"

The remaining words were lost to me as I caught sight of the momentary expression on her face. For a second the evidently unwelcome news, I thought, would make her faint again. But no! that was not the expression. The look of intense love which she had kept fixed on him suddenly gave place to a pallor and a look as of one to whom that news was not absolutely unexpected, but who expected it as the very last straw

in a load of evil. But it was only momentary. She drew away and the coolness suddenly assumed was almost as tragic in its intensity as the look of vengeance I felt the other was.

Yet her quiet assumption of the thread of the conversation disarmed us both.

"You married!" There was a hard sort of laugh. Then, after a pause, "Well, I will come and see you perhaps to-morrow," she said.

We left after a most conventional leave-taking, and left the Exhibition grounds on our way home. Before parting we exchanged cards, and I promised to look him up. His name was Leonard Methuen, and he was an official in the Government service.

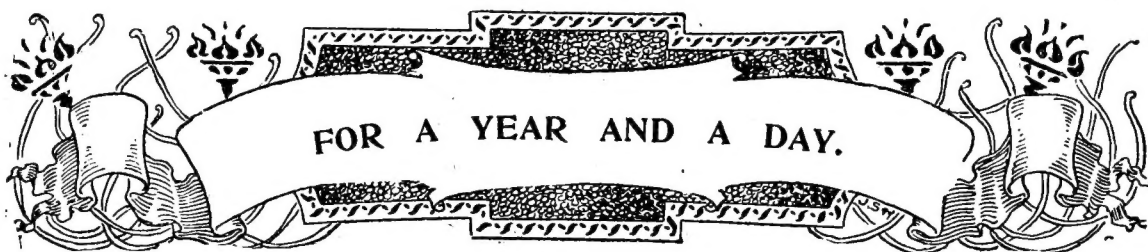
* * * * *

The promised visit to his rooms was almost forgotten a week after. But I was terribly awakened to the remembrance by the newspapers, which told of a tragedy in the West End.

As the papers said, "A young man, Mr. L. Methuen, was found in his rooms at Warwick Road stabbed to the heart with a stiletto which was found in the hand of an Italian girl lying dead at his side. It is clearly a case of murder and suicide by the girl. The latter has been recognised as one of the performers in the Woman's Exhibition. No motive is known at present."

But I knew of one. Perhaps wrongly, but I could not think evil of either of the victims. The two cold and hot-blooded natures had viewed life differently.

STUART BLOFIELD.



NICHOLAS LITTLEFIELD was a man who certainly ought never to have been married, at least so said those who knew him best. And this not because of any personal obliquity or moral one-sidedness—he was, indeed, honest and true to a degree—but solely by reason of his peculiar temperament, his utter inability, in fact, to rightly recognise his responsibility as a husband and father, a social unit, a living member of the great human family.

A clever man, he ever seemed to be but on the eve of success, the accomplishment, the fruition always, like the "Children's Ship," kept outside the bar, or else, hindered by the off-shore breeze, never advanced beyond the horizon, by-and-by to disappear again into the great dark sea of "hope denied." A simple-minded, absent-minded man, too, was he, so much so that the failing, if failing it were, exposed him not a little to the mocks and gibes of his especial circle.

His occupation no one knew, for he had tried so many ways and means of providing for his own needs and those of his household that it is doubtful whether he was himself able definitely to specify the particular trade or profession he was really of.

His wife, one of those exceptional natures, popularly known as "one-of-a-thousand," in giving him herself

had kept back no part of the price. Love is, proverbially, a woman's, a woman's whole existence, the fractional portion of the average man's life that it occupies being hardly worth consideration. Hepzibah Littlefield's home was her world. It contained all that she loved and cared for—husband and infant son, and although the pinch of poverty was often felt she bore it bravely for the very love's sake.

Nicholas' latest idea was inventive. He had discovered, or thought he had—which with some people amounts to the same thing—a means by which the careful housewife might cook, warm, and illuminate with atmospheric air, caught, bottled, and distributed by a mechanical process too elaborate for description here. With the persuasive tongue of the inventor he had induced a friend, possessed of more money than discretion, to defray the preliminary expenses—patent fees, the making of models, and other things and sundry connected with the exploitation of "The Universal Heat and Light Generator."

As yet it had been all going out and nothing coming in, so that it was not wonderful that Hepzibah should sigh much in secret, and look forward with trembling anxiety to an almost hopeless coming-time. Not only did this domestic revolutionary fail to impress other

people with the marvellous efficacy of his discovery—inasmuch as slender pockets must, so he argued, feel the benefit of practically free fire and light—but upon his hands remained a vast stock of unsaleable machines, which, though paid for by the friend aforesaid, effected nothing and did good to nobody.

It was at this time that Nicholas conceived the notion of seeking fortune in a foreign land—Australia to wit. He was childishly ignorant of travel, had never, indeed, sailed salt water in all his life; but, as he told Hepzibah, there was just a possibility that the Antipodes would recognise the value of his "Generator," and that in something less than no time he should have "struck oil," and be in a position to send across for her and little Guy.

For he meant to go alone. The house in London was Hepzibah's own, and she had besides a small annuity of something under a pound a week left her by her father at his death. She would, therefore, be not quite without means, if even she received nothing from her husband, which was an eventuality more probable than otherwise.

One thing troubled him, and, for him, troubled him much, for it touched him closely—the parting with his little son. He felt it more even than the leaving his wife. Oftentimes had he neglected the doing of trivial things, the remembering and carrying out of which would materially have brightened Hepzibah's life and given a sensible fillip to her happiness.

But the child—his little laddie—had so wound himself round his father's heart, shown him so plainly that there existed something upon which he could lavish his affection, that, waverer as he was, he almost hesitated as he kissed the chubby little cheek on the night before he went. He was to be up and leave before daylight, and Guy would be in dreamland when Nicholas started on his journey.

"Where's you goin'?" said Guy, wistfully looking up into his father's face. "When's you comin' back?"

"Where am I going, old chap? Why, to 'Tom Tiddler's Ground' to pick up gold and silver for you and mumma. And I'm coming back when I've got a sackful. Then we'll have good times, sonny, good times. Never have been or will be such times as we'll have then. And I'm only going for a year and a day, you know."

"Oh, make haste then, daddy, and come back; and you'll bring me some nice toys, won't you? A steamer with real engines that'll work, and a magnet that draws ducks in a basin of water, and a cannon that will fire off, and a—"

"Oh, yes, I'll bring you a steamer and a magnet, and I won't forget the ducks."

"You are a dear, good daddy!" and the little arms were round his neck, the little fair-haired head nestled on his breast, and Nicholas, fearing to further trust himself, gently laid the child back upon the pillow and left the room with a sob in his throat that echoed there many and many a time in the course of the year that followed.

* * * * *

There is a long, wide street in the great city of Sydney, the Antipodean metropolis, which is every whit as crowded and full of bustle at midday as is the principal thoroughfare in any one of the largest provincial towns in England. The shops are as big and as well-stocked as are those of London, which is saying a good deal.

A certain man, a loosely-built, shambling creature, shuffles restlessly along the pavement, stopping every now and again to examine carefully the shop windows,

especially those in which toys and pretty things, suitable for children, are displayed in tempting profusion.

At last he halts in front of a shop of more than ordinary pretensions, and where the goods on show are of the most superior and costly description. Nothing else appears to attract his attention or have any interest for him. Toys evidently are the sum and end of his quest.

He might be, for all the passers-by knew to the contrary, a veritable "Santa Claus" on the look-out for objects to fill his little customers' stockings with next Christmas. His eyes rove in earnest, eager fashion over the feast of good things (in the toy way) set out before him, and it is only when he has apparently come to some sort of a decision with regard to certain possible purchases that he at length enters the store.

What a wonderful collection it is of articles that he selects, and how scrupulous is he that not only shall each particular thing be of a certain style and make, but he never questions in any way the cost, however great, and is utterly indifferent to the probable amount of the bill.

The salespeople are inclined to think him some harmless being with a mania for toys and childish bric-a-brac, but when, his errand done, he gives orders for the whole to be securely packed for Europe, and forthwith despatched on board the *ss. Southern Cross*, they are puzzled beyond measure.

He cares not, however, and as he wanders back through the streets to his rooms, and looks round them for the last time, he smiles contentedly to himself and sits for an hour or more gazing at the faded photograph of a pretty boy of about three, the only thing which has not been stowed away for removal.

Only a month ago he had been discharged from the asylum as a cured patient. Eighteen years before he had been brought there by two men, who said that he had been wounded at an up-country camp. Three "sundowners," after sharing his tea and damper, had during the night made an attempt to rob him. The result was a serious blow on the back of the head, and for awhile complete unconsciousness. They had thought it well to bring him by easy stages into Sydney, where a doctor had certified that his brain was at least temporarily unhinged.

The police who accompanied the little party testified to the respectability of his two mates, and the authorities, finding upon him no clue in the shape of an address to friends or relatives, could do nothing but detain him. A large sum in gold dust, sovereigns, and notes was handed over to the steward of the asylum as the property of the injured man.

His name, Nicholas Littlefield, marked on his linen, was all in the way of identification they could discover, and in the hope that he would presently recover his memory and general mental balance, they decided not to advertise.

Time went on, and still he remained oblivious to everything in his life previous to his landing in Sydney. Sometimes, but very rarely, he would cry quietly, and, taking a pillow, would carry it tenderly in his arms up and down for hours, talking to it and crooning over it. Then he would relapse into utter ignorance of his past, and so continue for perhaps a year or more.

When he left the institution rooms were taken for him in the city, and every arrangement made for his comfort. From the moment, however, of his re-entry into social life he seemed to be possessed with but two dominant ideas: he would go back to England and at

once, and he must get the toys for his little Guy that he had promised him on the night when he had bidden him good-bye.

This was all possible, for during the first years of his residence in the colony he had been fortunate, not as a pioneer of atmospheric heat and light generation, for his Australian cousins would have none of it, but as a gold-miner. Associating himself with two honest-hearted Englishmen, he had been singularly successful, and, although not now inordinately wealthy, had sufficient to make things easy at home for the rest of life's journey. It is easily understandable that he never wrote, seeing who and what he was, and of course after the accident writing was impossible, his mind being a blank.

That nearly twenty years had elapsed since England's shores faded out of his sight he had not even the faintest notion. Little Guy was little Guy still to his sore, hungry heart. He pictured the toddling feet hastening towards him, the outstretched, dimpled hands eager to grasp at the treasures his "dear daddy" had brought him; while his ear could hear distinctly the crow of delight as wonder after wonder revealed itself to the baby eyes.

He lived in sheer anticipation. Poor Hepzibah scarce came into his vision, or if at all, but as a mere detail, a necessary background to the fair-haired, laughing little elf who was calling him home again with love's sweetest note, and whose little hands were hauling, as were they on his heart-strings, on the tow-rope of the *Southern Cross*.

The other passengers thought their fellow somewhat uncanny, unsociable; in fact, not a little mad, but he hurt nobody—he was so quiet, so gently inoffensive, that often the children would come around his deck-chair and listen to him as he told them fairy stories of marvellous and original ingenuity. At first the parents, especially the mothers, were fearful and repressive, but soon it was seen that the old man—his hair was snow-white now—was quite harmless, and the little ones learnt to love him dearly.

The packing-case containing the wonderful gifts for his baby boy he refused to be parted from, and it stood in his cabin, where he could always see and touch it, while he never failed when going on deck to lock the door and put the key in his pocket.

It was a cold, bleak November day when he disembarked at Tilbury Docks. For an hour previous to landing he had been busy selecting certain articles out of the wonderful packing-case and making them up into a huge parcel, which he carried ashore with him. Regretfully he left the case behind, to be forwarded up to London with his other baggage.

The lamps were being lit as he descended from a cab at the end of the street. He would not drive up to the door, he would inquire first if all were well, and if Hepzibah and his boy still lived in the old house. His heart beat excitedly; he could scarce control himself. The parcel in his arms was more than once in danger of falling, it was of enormous size, while he, for a man, was diminutive, and disposed to nervous unsteadiness of gait and manner.

Halfway along the street he saw come swinging along a fine, stalwart, young fellow, fully six feet in height.

"Pardon me, sir," said Nicholas hesitatingly as they came abreast of one another, "could you tell me if Mrs. —Mrs. Littlefield still lives at No. 7? There is, too, a —a little boy living there," and Nicholas' voice trembled as he looked wistfully up into the young giant's face.

"No. 7? Oh, yes, Mrs. Littlefield still lives there, I know; but the little chap you speak of is gone—gone long ago."

"Gone! Not dead—not dead!" and Nicholas, deadly white, clutched hold of the young fellow's arm to keep himself from falling. "Don't tell me he's dead! See, sir, these are for him. He asked me for them, and I remembered—I remembered. This ship—look!" and he began nervously to undo the string of the big brown-paper parcel. "The engines—they work; I tried them! And see, too, I've got the magnet, and the ducks, and the cannon, and—he's not dead! He can't be! Tell me he's not dead!"

Gently releasing himself from Nicholas' grasp, and supporting him with his own strong arm, the other said softly:

"No, he's not dead, for I saw him this morning, and spoke to him, and he to me. I live at No. 7 myself."

It might have been some echo of the long ago days, something familiar in the tone of voice, that broke the spell.

"Your name? What is your name? Tell me—tell me!"

"Guy. My name is Guy—"

"Oh, God!—dear God! how good you are! But I—I cannot understand. Are you really my little Guy—my baby laddie?"

"If your name is Littlefield, as I think it to be, I am. But not your little Guy. Come, it's only a step. Come to mother; she will be glad."

And the two went on and went in.

It was Nicholas, but yet it was another man. The grey-haired, patient-looking woman that rose up to greet him knew him, and just took him to her—thankfully, joyfully. She had hoped for it, against reason, perhaps, but still hoped for it, yearned for it, and now she had obtained her heart's desire.

RALPH ENDERBY.

Does Anyone Want a Christmas Card?

Applications for the Christmas Cards are pouring in by thousands every post, and some little delay will necessarily result in filling the most recent orders. However, copies of the Cards may be obtained at the rate of six for fourpence, or twelve for sevenpence, post free.

The picture is a reproduction of a photograph, and contains a seasonable and suitable inscription. All those applications which have been received up to and including Friday, December 7th, will be attended to without any charge, but having dispatched the whole of the original number printed, we are urged by those who have received the Cards and want more, to reprint. This we are doing, and propose to make the nominal charge mentioned above, to which we are sure readers will not take exception.

Application should be made to the CHRISTMAS CARD ROOM, Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

£420 HAS NOW BEEN PAID AWAY

in connection with the Scheme, and there are still many Envelopes waiting to be claimed.

The Sketch

"HAVE YOU GOT THAT £10 NOTE?"

suitable for two gentlemen and one lady, has now been put into type, and is to be obtained in book form, at sixpence per copy, from Messrs. Samuel French Limited, Theatrical Publishers, 89 Strand, London, W.C.

NO FEE WILL BE CHARGED AMATEURS FOR PLAYING IT.

The scene is one that can easily be arranged, and the costumes are quite ordinary ones.



Mr. Bowser's Tribulations.

XXX.—HE STARTS A TEMPERANCE CRUSADE
AND GETS ALL MIXED UP.

THE Bowsers had finished dinner in great harmony and returned to the sitting room when Mr. Bowser opened the front door to take a look at the weather. Just then a drunken man came along, and after holding to the fence for a moment he pushed the gate open and lurched forward on to the grass.

Mr. Bowser called his wife to the door, and, pointing to the recumbent figure, he said:

"And they send money to the heathen of Africa when we have such things as that at home!"

"That's nothing new," observed Mrs. Bowser.

"No; it's only a drunken man, only a husband and father, only one of our fellow beings turned into a beast in order that public-houses may thrive. My goodness, if I only had the power to stop such things!"

"Men have been getting drunk ever since they learnt how to make strong drink, and they will probably keep on for anything you can do. It's an evil, of course, but we needn't be upset over it."

"And do you tell me," exclaimed Mr. Bowser as he turned on her, with indignation in his tones, "that you can see that man lying there like a hog without feeling that someone should be held severely responsible?"

"What can we do?"

"I'll show you what we can do. I'll take this man's case as a start, and before I've finished I'll make Rome howl. Here and now I'll begin a temperance crusade."

"Then you'll do a very foolish thing and get yourself into no end of trouble. You'd much better come in and smoke your cigar and let the man sleep for an hour and then stagger off home."

Mrs. Bowser entered the house, and he descended the steps, followed by the cat, and bent over the man on the grass, whose legs were doubled up under him as he snored in blissful ignorance. It took a great deal of shaking and punching and rolling to rouse him, but at last he sat up and looked stupidly about him and called out

"Wha-what's er mazzer? Whaz you hitting me f'r?"

"My dear fellow man, I am here to aid you," replied Mr. Bowser. "Someone, in order to make a few pence profit, has sold you liquor and made a beast of you. Come with me and point out the man, and I will let him know what the world thinks of him. Ah, the shame of it — the shame!"

"Yesh, shameful case—shameful," muttered the man as he seized the iron rails of the fence and pulled himself to his wobbly legs. "Shay, old man, you goin' buy me nozzer glass er beer?"

"No, indeed. I'm going to save you. Brace up and try and throw off this stupor, so you can go with me."

"Goin' ter shavé me, eh? Well, I want ter be shaved. When we goin' ter get er beer, eh?"

"There will be no more beer, my friend," solemnly replied Mr. Bowser as he patted the man on the arm. "I take it that you have a wife?"

"Yes, got er wife."

"And children?"

"Yesh; sheven little children."

"And they may be hungry at this moment because you have spent your money on drink. I can almost imagine that I hear their wails for bread."



"Shameful case—shameful," muttered the man as he seized the iron rails of the fence.



Mr. Bowser received what is called "the cold chuck."

"Yesh, wailin' for bread, and hain't got no bread," said the man as he began to soften. "Wife and sheven children wailin' for bread; and I'm full er beer!"

"And someone ought to be sent to prison because such a state of things is allowed! Man, you were tempted to drink."

"Yesh; tempted to drink. Had er shilling ter buy bread f'r er children, and man said I had better spend it on beer. He orter be shent prison. Wish I had anouzzer glass beer, though."

"I see. When the craving once begins, it is hard to satisfy it. You'll get no more beer, however. I am going to save you from yourself. Let me get my hat, and then you come with me."

"Are you going to the pub?"

"Yes; I want to call at half-a-dozen public houses and hold you up as an object lesson. After that we will take bread and hope and consolation to the wife and children."

"Where are you going?" asked Mrs. Bowser as Mr. Bowser came in for his hat.

"I'm going to start a crusade against intemperance," he replied. "There's a man who has been reduced to the level of a hog by dealers in strong drink, while his wife and children are starving."

"But you'd better guide him out of the gate and let him go. You'll only get into trouble if you pursue this fad."

"Fad! Fad! Woman, have you got human feelings, a soul, a heart, any care whether your fellow creatures walk upright or grovel in the gutter? I shall go with him. I shall start a crusade. I shall accomplish something for humanity."

She could say no more. She stood on the steps with the cat while he took the drunken man by the arm and led him up the street. She sighed as she felt that something was about to happen, but the cat arched her back and grinned.

Mr. Bowser led his man into the first public-house he came to. There were a dozen men drinking at the bar, but he heeded them not as he fastened his gaze on the publican in his shirt sleeves and said:

"Wrecker of homes and destroyer of family happiness, behold your work!"

"What's the matter with you, old man?" was the reply as the publican came from behind the bar.

"The matter with me, sir—the matter with me is that I found this man reduced to the level of a beast through your influence and temptations. Gaze on him! He is a husband and father. His wife weeps and his children cry for bread, while you have taken his last copper for drink."

"Yesh, taken my lash copper," tearfully added the convert.

"You old duffer, whatever do you mean!" shouted the publican as a dangerous look gleamed in his eyes.

"I mean that you and others have wrecked this poor man's life and that of his family, and are driving him to a pauper's grave."

"Yesh, wrecked my poor life!" blubbered the inebriate as he smelt round for beer.

"You're a liar!" shouted the publican at Mr. Bowser.

"What! Look out, sir!"

"I say you're a liar and an ass! The man has neither wife nor child and is one of the worst characters in town. What do you mean by coming in here and telling me such a story as this?"

"You have tempted him, and you know it," exclaimed Mr. Bowser, feeling that he must bluff it out.

"Liar again! He has never had a drink in this bar. Get out of this."

Mr. Bowser received what is called "the cold chuck."

The publican and his potman seized him and tossed him about and punched his head and flung him out on to the pavement, like a bag of sand, and he wobbled home like a mule with the blind staggers.

"Well, how do you like crusading?" asked Mrs. Bowser as she and the cat met him in the hall.

Mr. Bowser held his swimming head in his hands and uttered a sort of moan.

"You needn't hunt any farther for an object lesson," she continued as she looked him over and saw that he was a "chucked" man.

This time his moan was longer drawn out, and she waved him upstairs and followed after with a wet towel, the camphor bottle, and a yard of sticking plaster.

M. QUAD.

[Next Week: He Levelled all Distinctions and a Tramp Levelled him.]

A Commonplace Story.

THE wind howled and whistled along the Embankment, making the poor wretches who nightly sought what repose they could on the hard seats shiver with cold. It was only those whose business, or sterner necessity, caused them to be out who passed along that way.

One of the few pedestrians out on that bitter night was Arthur Rollitt. As he passed several of the occupants of the seats appealed to him for aid.

"'Ave yer a penny, sir, just ter get a cup o' corfy?" asked one.

Arthur drew out several coppers and handed them to the man.

"Thank yer, sir," was the response. "It's awf'ul cold, an' a cup o' corfy does warm yer."

Then he turned to his companion.

"Come on, Bill, this gent's gimme enuf fur us both ter 'ave a cup an' a bite o' summat to eat as well," and with repeated thanks the two human scarecrows, for such they were in appearance, scurried off to the nearest stall to get the warmth-giving fluid.

Arthur Rollitt pursued his course, resuming the train of thought which this incident had disturbed. Two years ago he had come up to London to take a good berth which he had secured, thereby exciting the envy of his companions in the village where he had resided.

To them, who had never seen London except on a brief holiday trip, this was synonymous with coming into a fortune. Some of them had been up probably to see a football final at the Crystal Palace, and in the course of the day had included flying visits to sundry places of interest.

They had gazed in admiration at the big building where "ahr member" was supposed to nightly watch the interests of the country in general and their part of it in particular; they had trod the floors of the Abbey and St. Paul's with reverential steps; they had been to the Tower and thought of the story of the two young princes who, according to the school history books, had been murdered there; they had noted the top-hatted, frock-coated throng, and concluded that this garb was indicative of a well-filled purse. All these things had they seen, and returned home wishing that Fate or Fortune would lead them to the gay Metropolis.

Hence, as I have said, when Arthur Rollitt gained his London appointment he was greatly envied. But while I am thus descanting on the ideas and longings of the young men of the villages, Arthur Rollitt is cooling his heels on that wind-swept Embankment. And why is he there?

Let me trace his career through the two years. On his arrival in his new berth he had most assiduously, during the day, devoted himself to his duties and quickly won golden opinions from his chiefs. During the evenings he also assiduously devoted himself to other things.

There were many, many theatres, and these he frequented. In his own district he had paid a shilling for the privilege of a seat in the pit, here he paid half-a-crown. There were dances, too. At home he, like his fellows, went to occasional dances, where all that was necessary were a white tie and a pair of shoes, and even these were not *de rigueur*. Here, he must, of course, have a dress suit, and the dress suit was accordingly procured through the good offices of a friend who introduced him to an accommodating tailor, and, later on, this same knight of the shears fitted him out with the frock coat for which his soul yearned. Meanwhile, he kept on spending at a rate that exceeded his income.

When the holidays came he betook himself to the home of his childhood, but it must be admitted that it was owing more to a desire to appear in his fashionable clothes and air his London-gained knowledge—some of it—than to a superabundance of filial affection.

By-and-by bills began to fall due, and the smiling tailor began to wear a frown. Still the young fool pursued his course. With the advent of summer came trips up the river on Sunday and various other amusements, and Arthur Rollitt gained the title he was particularly anxious to get. He was dubbed a jolly good sort. He was a good talker, and had read largely before he commenced the "giddy goat" business, and he was accounted clever.

But soon the creditors grew tired of waiting, and one day one of those disagreeable individuals,yclept bailiffs, came upon the scene, and tendered him a most pressing invitation to call upon a gentleman known as the county court judge. This was the beginning of the end.

Messrs. Watkin, Son, and Watkin were old-fashioned enough to have an extreme abhorrence of debts and very little faith in those who incurred them. They had heard rumours that young Rollitt was in difficulties, and though his work was still well done, they had a doubt that he might be tempted some day to relieve those pressing difficulties by juggling with their accounts. Such things had happened before, and prevention was to their minds much better than cure.

On presenting himself at the office one morning shortly after the visit of the county court emissary he was informed that the chief wished to see him.

"Hang it," muttered Arthur. "Wish it had been any other morning."

The fact of the matter was the previous day glorious news had arrived from the seat of war, and he had been "Mafficking," eventually arriving home with the milk, and consequently he was not in the best condition for an interview with the chief. Pulling himself together he obeyed the summons.

"Good-morning, Mr. Rollitt," said the chief as he entered. "Take a seat, will you?" and then he went on scanning the morning's letters.

Arthur waited, wondering what was coming. When

he had got through the pile, Mr. Watkin again turned to him.

"Don't you think you are a very foolish young man?" he asked.

"I don't quite understand you, sir," stammered Arthur.

"Don't you? Well, I haven't much time to spare this morning for explanations. Briefly, we have heard rumours of difficulties with your creditors, and as we pay our employes sufficiently well to enable them to avoid that kind of thing, of course we have drawn our own conclusions. Moreover, we don't care for gentlemen like the one who visited you recently to be seen coming into our offices, and we therefore think it would save any further unpleasantness if you were to tender us your resignation at the end of the present month."

"Very well, sir," replied Arthur, and the interview terminated, as did his engagement with Messrs. Watkin, Son, and Watkin in due course.

This was the end of his hopes of building up a fortune as a City merchant. He had so little hope of gaining another situation, considering the circumstances, that he applied for none. He sat down to write stories instead. To his intense joy and, it must be admitted, his surprise, his first was accepted, and before he met with a rejection eight of his short tales had been accepted and paid for.

Sanguine as ever, Arthur Rollitt began to look forward to the time when editors would inundate him with requests for more; but suddenly the fountain of his inspiration dried up, and his manuscripts came back to him with heart-breaking monotony.

He never wrote home. They would doubtless see his work in the magazines, and would judge from it that all was well. When he had overcome his difficulties he would go and see them with the laurels of his literary triumphs on his brow. Meanwhile, before his London friends he presented a smiling face, and the general impression was that young Rollitt was doing remarkably well. How well he was doing one incident will show.

One night, after a visit to a theatre on the invitation of one of his friends, he strolled down to the Embankment. He had now come to that stage where he paid for his bed night by night at a cheap—very cheap—hotel, and on this particular occasion he had not the requisite coin.

"Funny time to be strolling around here, isn't it?" queried a policeman whom he encountered.

"It's all right, constable. I am a journalist, and at present I am engaged upon a series of articles describing night life in London for a country paper."

"Oh, is that it? Well, you'll find plenty to write about here," replied the officer, and strolled away.

Thus did Arthur Rollitt gradually but slowly slide down, until at last he could meet his friends no more, and thus we find him strolling once more on the Embankment.

"How the dickens do those poor wretches stand it?" he muttered. "And yet, except in the matter of dress, they are better off than I. There are so many things they can do which I cannot. Matches, newspapers, or penny toys they can buy and sell in the streets."

A thought occurred to him which seemed to amuse him.

"I wonder what my friends would say if one night I pushed a box of vestas under their noses and yelled 'Wax-lights, cigar-lights,' or I might try 'Collar-studs, six a penny.'"

Here his laugh, which was a joyless one, suddenly ceased. Thoughts of friends who were dear to him

came before his mind's eye, friends who would grieve at his mysterious absence, and as these thoughts crowded through his brain the laugh gave place to tears, and these in turn gave place to anger—against himself.

"Don't be a fool," he muttered, addressing himself. "It's your own fault. You have made your bed, now go and lie on it."

He had reached Waterloo Bridge. He stood upon the seat of one of the embrasures and looked down at the muddy waters and the lights on the barges.

"I can't swim, and they say drowning's a pleasant death," he muttered.

"Hello, sir, what are you doing up there?" asked a constable, and looking down Arthur Rollitt saw the officer of the former night on the Embankment. The constable in turn recognised him.

"What is it this time, sir? Are you going to do night life on the river?"

"No, under it," muttered Arthur under his breath. Then, addressing the policeman, he said: "Did you ever attempt to describe the tragedies of life and death, officer?"

"No, sir," he replied.

"Well, you can make a start—with mine," and with this Arthur Rollitt plunged swiftly over the parapet.

The constable blew his whistle, and soon the alarm was raised, but only the body of Arthur Rollitt was recovered. There was nothing in his pockets to identify him—he had been careful to remove everything to obliterate all marks before starting out.

A few days later a jury returned a verdict that an unknown man was found drowned, and that there was no evidence to show the state of his mind.

His friends will go on wondering what has become of the gay and brilliant member of their circle, not knowing that on a cold October night the foolish life was ended.

JOHN HY. PEAT.

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BY ORDER OF THE BOARD.

FOR seven years old John Fosdick had been teller at a large bank in a western town. Previous to his taking the place he had been a private banker and merchant and had come to grief. He had secured the place through the influence of the chairman, but there had been a "ring" against him in the bank. The place had been promised to a relative of the cashier's, and old John was looked upon as an intruder.

Without the chairman behind him, even after he had held the place for three or four years, he would have received notice by those in authority. He was a man who said but little and rendered faithful service. As he grew old they tried to make his age a point against him, and, not succeeding in that, it was hoped that he might get caught upon a forged cheque or some other act of carelessness.

He went his way without paying them back in their own kind. If he lost his place, it meant poverty to himself and wife in their old age. He was prompt, careful and systematic, and the plans of his enemies were defeated.

The seventh year was drawing to a close when old John was hauled over the coals. A stranger presented a cheque which he hesitated to pay and about which he consulted the cashier. Later on the cashier stated that he had ordered it to be held over pending examination. Old John said that he had been ordered to pay it at once. The cheque was paid, and being forged, the bank was £150 out of pocket. It was a question of veracity between cashier and teller, and it was decided within the bank that the cashier had the better of it. Just then, too, old Fosdick slipped in a wrong figure in making up his day's account, and, though it made only a difference of twopence in the total, it seemed to prove that old age and carelessness had unfitted him for his position. The chairman being abroad, the board took the case under consideration and "by order" the old man was sent out into the world to begin life anew. There were resolutions, of course, and one of them was to the effect that the bank presented him with the sum of twenty pounds for long and faithful services.

He put on his hat without protest, and he left the bank without taking the money. At his humble home an old and anxious wife met him and, wifelike, gave him sympathy and encouragement first of all.

"Never mind, John; never mind," she kept saying. "We have a few pounds saved, and you are only fifty-five years old, and something good is sure to turn up. You have fought too long to give up now."

But the weeks went by, and nothing turned up. The business world has very little use for an old man who has no capital. John Fosdick's savings were gradually used up, the generosity of his few friends exhausted, and there came a day when the question of food and fuel became a serious one.

He was not one to sponge or turn beggar. If the world would not let him earn his food, at least he would go out of it and hope that his going would open the hearts of men towards his widow.

After pondering for an hour he started out with the firm intention of drowning himself in the river.

It was a blustering November day, and as he passed

the bank with bowed head, bent shoulders and well-worn garments, even those who had deprived him of his place felt a touch of sympathy. He was making for the suburbs and a highway bridge and wondering how long it would take to drown and what men would say of him when dead, when he caught sight of men and horses skulking behind an empty factory. It was singular, bound on such a mission as he was, that he should have seen or wondered and speculated on why those men and horses were there, but he had hardly passed the factory when he suddenly turned about and ran for the business part of the town with a speed that astonished himself.

In the vaults of the bank was a sum close upon £60,000, deposited there temporarily by a railway company. Outside the vault was a big safe containing £5,000 more. It was a quiet afternoon, with few people moving about. Over a hundred of the men living in town had gone over to the next town to an auction of real estate. There hadn't been a better opportunity for years to make a dash at the bank.

Of a sudden old John Fosdick, bareheaded and his gray hair flying, burst into the bank. He was speechless with his running, but he did not try to use his voice. He dashed open the gate and seized the heavy doors of the safe and closed them with a bang.

Several employes tried to seize him, thinking he had gone crazy, but he shook them off, and just as firing and shouting were heard in the street he slammed the door of the vault. He had only turned from it when four ruffians dashed into the bank, each with a pistol in hand, while three others remained outside and fired at every pedestrian in sight.

"Hands up and money out!" shouted one of the three who entered the bank, and in an instant every official and employe was covered.

The cashier gave in, and the others followed suit, but old John Fosdick stood up gamely under the deadly revolvers and quietly said:

"Gentlemen, this bank is closed for the day."

"Open the safe and vaults or I'll blow your brains out!"

"I have a key to neither."

"Take that!"

The old man sank with a bullet in his brain, and the white-faced cashier would have opened safe and vault with his own hands but for the arrival of assistance. A few citizens had gathered and killed one of the watchers and wounded another. This caused a stampede on the part of the desperadoes.

They did not even grab the money packages in sight, but hastened to get away as fast as possible. John Fosdick had not drowned himself, but he lay dead. He had been discharged on account of old age and carelessness, but his speed and acumen had saved the bank from being robbed. He wondered what men would say of him after death. They said he was a hero. He had hoped men would have pity on his aged widow. When he had been laid away, the bank voted her a life pension, the citizens and the railway company made up a public purse, and she wanted for nothing the rest of her life.

C. B. LEWIS.

BY THE HEAD OF A MANDARIN.

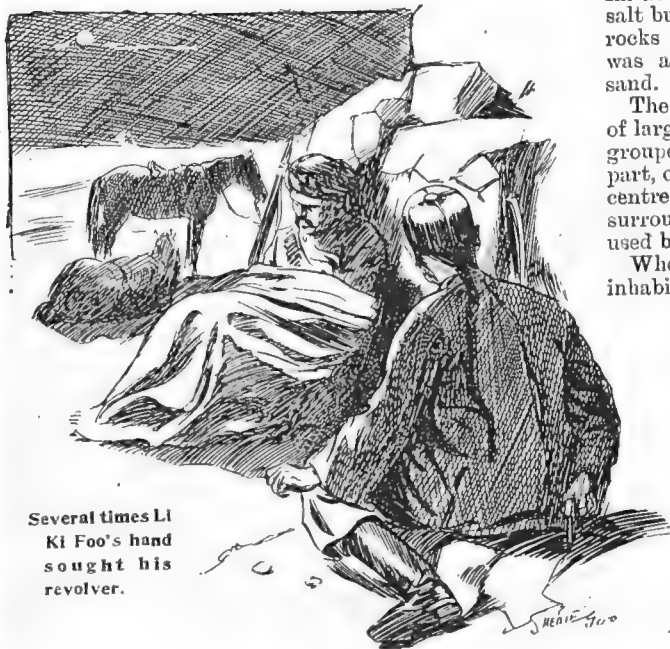
In Three Parts.

BY SADI GRANT.

PART III.

His first action on finding himself alone was to open the little box sent after him to Peking. Inside were two small, flat, white cakes of some opaque substance, wrapped up carefully in cotton wool and then inclosed in small, neat, chamois-leather cases. They might have been mistaken for watches. Li Ki Foo placed these carefully in the two pockets of his embroidered waistcoat, then buttoned his straight jacket over. He wrote a few lines to Ah Cheh to tell him he had gone due east to the Tartar camp, to the camp of the Lusan tribe. These directions were enough, for when a large tribe like this were camped anywhere in the neighbourhood of a town, it was well-known in that town in which direction the encampment was. Then taking up a small bag already packed with necessities, and pushing a Colt's revolver into his belt, Li Ki Foo was ready. He left his only attendant behind with the note for Ah Cheh, and rode forth alone and unattended, except by the Tartar, across the pathless waste of the great steppes.

His companion was mounted on a horse as good as his own, of a tireless breed, ugly and wiry, accustomed to scanty food and frequent fasts, and long journeys across the shifting sand. They talked as they rode of many things, and a pleasant kind of friendship sprang up between them, without, however, in the least imperilling their ultimate intentions—that of the Tartar Chief to force a ransom from his guest, or that of the guest to kill his host, if he could find freedom for his brother in no other way.



Several times Li Ki Foo's hand sought his revolver.

Long before the end of the ride, Li Ki Foo had a very shrewd idea of who his companion really was. There was a dignity and presence about him that could not well have belonged to a man of inferior position, also, on two or three occasions, he practically admitted his headship of the tribe. Several times when they bivouacked together under the shadow of the great desert rocks, Li Ki Foo's hand sought his revolver, and he felt tempted to blow the Tartar's brains out, and so dispose of his brother's greatest enemy.

Yet each time an immense distaste of such a deed stopped him; it was such an unsportsmanlike way of getting rid of an enemy, to murder him by night. When the faint lavender streaks of dawn stole along the edge of the steppe, and the night owl gave a farewell hoot to the crouching leopard, when all nature lay hushed in the arms of the rising day, such evil thoughts fled like ghosts. No, the fight, if fight there was, must be fair and open, and Li Ki Foo fell back on his saddlebags with a sigh of relief.

The Tartar was not so unconscious during those long night vigils as his friend imagined; he slept almost literally with one eye open, and had Li Ki Foo really tried to shoot him, he might not have found him so entirely unprepared as he imagined.

On the evening of the third day they approached the Tartar camp. Scattered goats and camels, in search of fresh green stuff, became frequent; the trees had long been left behind, and hundreds upon hundreds of miles of rolling plains, like the waves of the sea, stretched as far as the sight could reach. Patches of scrubby, short salt bush made dark patches here and there, and great rocks were scattered about; but the prevailing colour was a hopeless yellow—hundreds of miles of yellow sand.

The encampment was very rough and primitive, but of large extent, quite three hundred tents and huts were grouped together; the tents were made, for the most part, of a kind of rough sacking, but two or three in the centre, standing alone, twenty yards or so from the surrounding ones, were white, the usual travelling tent used by Europeans.

When the two horsemen were seen approaching, all the inhabitants of the camp crowded out to welcome them, and Li Ki Foo could be under no further doubt as to who his companion was. The women and children kept in the background, but the men came forward, roughly saluting the chief, and among them Li Ki Foo saw his brother. He rode up to him at once, the bystanders looking on curiously, but not attempting to interfere.

"Greeting, Li Ham," he said shortly.

"Greeting, O Li Ki Foo!" said Li Ham in return; "wherefore comest thou thus unattended, unless thou also art a prisoner of the Tartars?"

"I came but to bring thy ransom, my brother," said Li Ki Foo, so that all might

hear. "Till it arrives I tarry in the Tartar's camp with thee."

Li Ham did not look as if he considered this a specially good arrangement, still he was exceedingly relieved to hear the ransom was really on its way, for he had been by no means sure that the old Mandarin would consider him worth the loss of so large a sum of money. He assisted his brother to dismount and then turned with him to greet the Tartar Chief.

"Thou knewest not I was myself thy host," said Ku civilly, "yet it is so, and we are no worse friends for our journey across the steppes together. Where two brave men meet there treachery flies. Here art thou my honoured guest, O Li Ki Foo; rest in peace in the strangers' tent till thy brother's ransom comes here from Leh."

"I thank thee and accept thy hospitality," said the Chinaman, gravely, "the word of the Chief is security for the traveller. Yet may I share my brother's tent, O Chief, I would have an added debt of gratitude."

"A prisoner's hut is not the tent of a guest," said the Tartar, "rather may thy brother share the stranger's tent with thee."

So it was settled. Li Ham's wardrobe was not extensive, and his belongings were soon moved into the tent appointed for his brother's use. A large bowl of goat's milk and a long piece of a kind of black bread was brought for Li Ki Foo's refreshment, together with a message that the Chief expected both brothers to dine with him at sunset.

As soon as Li Ki Foo found himself alone with his brother, he hurriedly explained to him the plan of deliverance. This met with little favour from Li Ham, who would much have preferred that the ransom should have been paid in a straightforward manner without further risk to himself.

"Already have I lost a finger," he said sulkily. "It seems to me, my brother, a very poor chance that we have of not losing our lives. These Tartars draw back at nothing. Should Ku see these troops of which you talk surrounding him, he would murder us both without a moment's delay."

Li Ki Foo calmly took from his pocket the two small leather packets, and gave one to his brother.

"Thou hast heard of dynamite, Li Ham," he said. "Take this; it is a bomb, so constructed that a sudden blow will make it explode, and then one alone of these small packets contains sufficient dynamite to kill and destroy all within a radius of twenty yards. Take it and keep it, for it is possible I may be separated from you, when the attack of Ah Cheh's troops takes place."

Li Ham drew back.

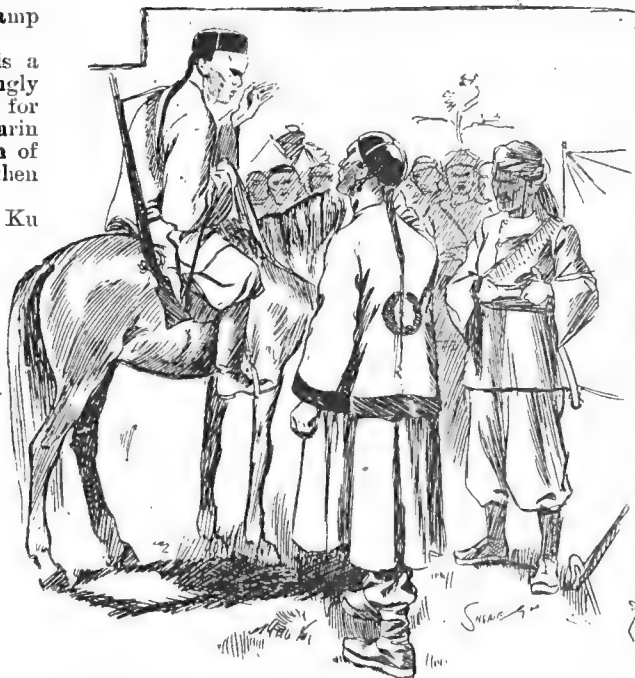
"It is not a pleasant waistcoat companion, O my brother," he said fearfully, "art sure the heat of my body will not cause it to explode?"

"Have I not carried both from Kin Sin?" said Li Ki Foo contemptuously, "and am I yet dead? Take it and place it in safety, for I know not when I may have the chance of passing it to thee again."

Li Ham took the bomb and placed it with inward trembling in a small inner pocket.

"When thinkest thou Ah Cheh will arrive here?" he asked his brother.

"In two days at latest," said Li Ki Foo shortly. "I gave him orders to follow at once, and he left Leh but two days after me, so he should arrive here at dawn of the third day from now."



He rode up to him at once, the bystanders looking on curiously.

"And supposing," said Li Ham shrewdly, "that both thou and myself are overpowered by numbers, before we have time to throw the bombs, what then? It seems to me like enough. The Tartars are no fools."

"Of that we must take our chance," said Li Ki Foo, "there is of course a risk of such possibility."

"Not only a risk, but a great likelihood," said Li Ham angrily; "the Tartars number at least two hundred full grown men; say, if twenty are slain by thy infernal bomb, will not the remainder suffice to overpower two men?"

"The remainder will, I trust, be so blinded and astonished by the explosion, that we can escape," said Li Ki Foo; "also we must not resort to the bombs till our last extremity is reached, and then our troops should be close at hand."

Still he could not hide from Li Ham, or even from himself, that it was likely to be a risky business. Li Ham privately determined to use his bomb before the attack on the camp became known, if he had the opportunity. That evening they dined with the Chief, in the open air outside his tent. The wine was good, having been looted from a caravan of Persian merchants, who were crossing from Leh to Ispahan, but the food left much to be desired, broiled kabobs of very dry, poor meat, probably goats' flesh, and rice, followed by cheeses of camels' milk, and a lot of small dried figs, really the best things there at all. Ku informed his guests that a messenger had already been dispatched to the bank at Leh, with the order for the ten thousand taels, and that he trusted they would not be long detained.

"In the meantime the best my poor camp can offer is at your honours' disposal," he continued graciously; "also, in two or three days' time, I go to hunt the wild sheep of Thibet with thirteen of my best followers, and if you will, you can accompany us."

"How long do you propose being away from the camp, O Chief?" asked Li Ki Foo.

"But three days," answered Ku. "It is an opportunity for your Excellencies," he added politely, "to see something of the steppes and the wild country round the camp."

"I thank you," said Li Ki Foo, "ever have I much wished to explore strange countries and to see strange sights outside of mine own land."

Yet he was inwardly much perplexed, for he calculated that Ah Cheh was not due till the third day, and if anything happened to delay him he would find them gone. So time passed on till the evening of the second day and both brothers retired to their tent for the night, outwardly calm as usual, but inwardly very much perturbed. Instead of lying down and undressing as usual, they merely put out their oil lamp to divert suspicion, and then sat in the dark ready dressed for flight, sitting bolt upright to avoid falling asleep. A Tartar was mounting guard outside, but when all was quiet in the camp he, too, lay down on the rough ground, and was soon snoring as loudly as his companions in the tents. Li Ham crept cautiously out to the tent door and listened eagerly, but no sound could be heard on the still night air.

"If Ah Cheh plays us false," he muttered, "or even if he is delayed but a few hours, the plan will fail."

Across a small, open stretch of ground the moon shone brightly on the white tent of the Chief and on a guard of three men at the door. What an opportunity was this to get rid of Ku, swiftly and easily, by throwing the bomb across the open place! In a minute Li Ham's hand was in his pocket, and he held the bomb in his hand. He took off the outer coverings, and stood for a second looking at the flat, round cake that was capable of such murderous deeds. Then he lifted his hand to throw it.

"Stay!" cried Li Ki Foo, who had just come out to

see what his brother was doing. But he was too late. The bomb had fallen short of the tent, but had struck a large stone outside sharply; instantly there was a terrific explosion. Sand and stones flew up in such blinding quantities it was impossible to see what damage was done. Both the Chinamen were thrown to the ground by the violence of the explosion. But they were too far off to be hurt, though their guard, who was only a few steps nearer, was killed by a fragment of rock falling on his head. Shrieks and cries came from every side, the camp was thoroughly woken up, and men rushed to the chief's tent from every quarter.

"Now is our time to escape, if ever," whispered Li Ham, and together they crawled out of the debris of their tent, and then, getting quickly to their feet, stole away as fast as possible to the outskirts of the now disorganised encampment. Nobody stopped them or asked where they were going, but they knew this state of things would not last for long, and they had better get away as soon as possible. They stumbled over tent ropes, and trod on many a sleeping dog, ere they reached the open plain. Here they looked in vain for any sign of Ah Cheh and his relieving force.

The first grey light of very early morning only enabled them to see a short distance, however, and they hoped as they went forward to meet him. Otherwise their case was hopeless indeed: there was no refuge of any kind for more than fifty miles, and they well knew that as soon as the Tartars had recovered the shock of their leader's death they would scour the plains around for their escaped prisoners. When caught, if caught they were, the vengeance of the Tartars would be terrible.

"Hadst thou but had patience," said Li Ki Foo, "all might have been well, but now, should Ah Cheh not appear in sight before two hours have passed, we are but dead men."

Li Ham did not reply, but marched on stolidly by his brother's side.

"Could we but secure two horses!" said Li Ki Foo, hopelessly.

"At the station where the outer guard lies," said Li Ham, "there saw I your horse but yesterday."

"Thou sayest not so?" said Li Ki Foo eagerly. "At all costs we must get him."

In the camp itself there were not more than thirty or forty horses, and these were kept in the centre and well guarded, as being the robbers' most valuable property. Li Ki Foo knew it was hopeless to think of getting them, but a single horse in an outside shed was a different thing. They stole up to the guard's hut silently, and looked in through an opening in the wall. Yes, there was the horse all right, but there was also a man sleeping on the ground beside him, fully armed. Li Ham being the lightest and smallest of the two, crept through the opening and dropped gently inside; then, quickly seizing the Tartar's short curved sword, he plunged it into the man's side twice. His victim simply groaned and rolled over dead; then Li Ham opened the door and led out the horse. The animal knew his master at once, and rubbed his head against his shoulder.

"For once must thou carry double, O Selim," said Li Ki Foo, patting his neck; "hasten, my brother, for the Tartars will be after us in a very short space."

Seizing the Tartar's sword, he plunged it into the man's side.





The bomb exploded with immense force in the face of the foremost Tartar.

Li Ham had re-entered the but to take the dead Tartar's sword and knife, for both he and Li Ki Foo had been deprived of their weapons as soon as they had reached the camp. Now Li Ham came out and mounted quickly behind his brother. They rode away quickly straight across the steppe in the direction of Kin Sin.

Li Ki Foo was afraid to urge Selim too quickly forward, in case he should break down altogether; still they went at a good pace, and the camp was soon several miles away. The sun got hotter and hotter, and Selim began to show great signs of fatigue; but hope was in sight. Still far away they saw a cloud of dust, which betokened the movements of a large body of horsemen—without doubt it was Ah Cheh at last. Alas! before these had come properly in sight, another body of horsemen was seen riding towards them from the opposite direction, and these last were much nearer.

The Chinamen urged on their horse to the utmost, and he responded by a gallant effort, but they could see his strength was nearly exhausted, and the Tartars gained on them steadily. Li Ki Foo looked round and took in the situation at a glance.

Not far off was a clump of rocks, that would afford a slight shelter to them and their horse. He still had one dynamite bomb and Li Ham had the Tartar's sword and knife. They would fight for their lives yet. Ah Cheh was now only half-a-mile off. Li Ki Foo told his plan to his brother in a few short sentences, and riding up to the rocks, they quickly dismounted, and established themselves in the best position they could.

On came the Tartars, their curved swords gleaming in the sun. Li Ki Foo waited till they were close to the furthest rock before launching his only defence. Then he threw the bomb, and it exploded with immense force in the face of the foremost Tartar. Most of the Tartars were killed, or so wounded as to be incapable of further fighting, and the remaining few, after lingering round for a very short time, turned and rode back across the plain to their encampment, no doubt thinking it hopeless to stay and engage the enemy they saw

coming on in such force, with their weakened numbers.

The Chinamen were nowhere to be seen, and their horse had torn away the bridle from its fastening, and was racing wildly over the steppes. Li Ki Foo and his brother were not dead, however, but they were insensible and half-buried by earth and stones; when Ah Cheh came up he soon unearthed them. Ah Cheh was not surprised by the explosion, for he had expected the packet sent to Pekin contained something of the kind, and he was thankful to find it had not killed the aggressors, as well as the aggressed.

He and a few of his little army stayed behind with his master, but the rest went on, under the command of the head soldier. They had come out for the purpose of looting the Tartar camp, and it was a pity they should be disappointed, according to Ah Cheh's own opinion.

The soldiers found, however, they had no easy task, for the men who turned back after the explosion gave warning of their coming, and the camp was fully prepared for their onslaught. Men fight hard when they fight for their lives and the whole of their earthly belongings, and in time the

Chinamen were driven back. They got, however, the thousand taels Li Ki Foo had promised in the first place, though it did not come to very much, when divided among so many.

Li Lang Hi welcomed his sons back with satisfaction, but he was more convinced than ever that the magic of the English, though useful was diabolical; and he recommended both sons, for the good of their souls, to put all foreign explosives and barbarian devices aside for the future, and trust only to the wisdom of China, the sharpness of her swords, and the beguiling deceit of true Chinese diplomacy.

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SHORT STORIES ABOUT ELEPHANTS.

We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humorous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 is. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of "The Lucky Bargee," by Harry Lander, to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source must be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr. John T. Murdoch, 8 West Adam Street, Edinburgh. Attempts this week must deal with Stories about XMAS FESTIVITIES, and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, December 17th. Post-cards only, please.

Charlie Got Jealous.

THEY were at the menagerie last Christmas. He looked a very shy young man, and the girl who leant on his arm was—well, one of Edinburgh's bonnie lassies.

When they came to the elephant the girl nervously (?) tugged at the young man's arm and exclaimed:

"Oh, Charlie, will it bite?"

"No, dear, of course not," said the young man with wonderful temerity. "elephants can't bite, but they can hug."

"Oh, Charlie!" said the girl, with a distracting smile, "I don't mind that."

And Charlie got so jealous he took her to see the tiger.

J. T. M.

Funny!

WHILE spending an evening at Belle Vue last week, I was watching an elephant—which had been giving rides—drinking at the lake, when two lads about twelve years of age came along.

One of them looked knowingly at the tremendous animal for a minute, and then, taking the other by the sleeve, pointed to the elephant, saying:

"Push him in, Tommy."

H. C. G. S.

Elephants Served Up Whole.

AT a certain restaurant not a hundred miles from Henrietta Street, it is the boast of the management that you have only to ask for a particular dish to get your wants supplied.

The other day a gentleman entered its portals and inquired of the obsequious waiter what he could have for lunch.

"Oh, anything you like, sir," replied the menial, "from a salted sausage to a pickled elephant."

"Oh, very well," replied the customer. "I'll have pickled elephant."

"Yes, sir," and the waiter disappeared to come up smiling a minute later with the announcement:

"I forgot to mention, sir, that we only serve our pickled elephants whole—we don't supply them in slices. If you think a whole one too much, we have some ham and chicken I can recommend."

He had ham and chicken.

J. B.

True Story of an Elephant.

A STORY is told of a civilian elephant that was employed in a timber yard. A number of logs had to be moved by him, and only one remained when the bell rang for ceasing work.

Of course the elephant knew the bell and what it meant, and was sauntering away, when the foreman bade him move the last log.

He did not object, but with all his tugging and straining did not manage to lift it. Seeing this, the foreman called up a second elephant to help, but even the two together did no good—the log could not be stirred. It must be left.

Next day, to the foreman's astonishment, when the bell rang for beginning work, the first elephant marched straight up to the log, lifted it quite easily, and carried it to its proper place.

One can only think that the clever fellow said in his heart, and told his companion:

"It's an awful shame to make us go on working when the bell has rung, so let us pretend we can't move the log!"

J. G. B.

Animal Friendships.

WILD elephants sometimes make devoted friends of other animals.

A party of hunters in Central Africa once wounded a large bull elephant, which, travelled scores of miles into the jungle, after receiving the heavy bullet in his shoulder.

The chase was abandoned for the time, but a fortnight later the hunters came upon the same beast. He was lying on his injured side near a stream in a dense forest. A buffalo cow was standing over the fallen monarch, gently licking the blood from the wound.

Frequently she would leave him and go to the stream, and by pawing at its edge toss a lot of water upon the rank grass within reach of the elephant's trunk. It was probably in this way that refreshing moisture had been conveyed to the fevered and suffering giant, keeping him alive.

The hunters were divided as to whether the elephant should be put out of his misery. It was finally decided to give him a chance for his life under the nursing of the cow.

Several weeks later, when the party were making their way back towards the course, they came across a lame elephant attended by a buffalo cow. The pair were not molested.

S. A. C.

Almost Human.

A VALUABLE elephant contracted a virulent disease of the eyes, and after suffering with it for a few days became blind.

His owner called in a surgeon, who, after examining the elephant's eyes, applied nitrate of silver to one of them, and the elephant, uttering a roar of pain, jumped up and behaved in such an outrageous fashion that it was some hours before he could be calmed down and secured.

The application was successful, the sight of the one eye being almost entirely restored.

The surgeon was willing to operate on the other eye if the elephant was properly secured before the operation. However, the elephant had recognised the doctor's voice, and, to everybody's astonishment, followed him of his own accord, lay down without any persuasion, placing his head on one side with the diseased eye upward, then curled up his trunk and drew in a deep breath, like any human being might do who was about to undergo a painful operation, and awaited the doctor's pleasure.

J. B.

Simpson's Experience.

WE had all told the best "yarn" we could think of, with the exception of Simpson.

"Now, come along, old man," said one, "what about that elephant business?"

Simpson fell back in his chair.

"Don't! don't!" he cried, "don't ask me to describe that horrible affair."

Everyone was instantly interested.

It took about fifteen minutes before he was finally persuaded to tell us his experience.

For half-an-hour he kept us all spellbound with the graphic description of how he was chased by a huge elephant in an Indian jungle.

"At last," he continued, "I got my chance. Dropping on one knee, I took accurate aim, and if it hadn't been for that confounded servant shaking me to say that 'breakfast was ready,' that elephant would undoubtedly have lost an eye."

H. C.

Engine and Elephant.

IN certain parts of India railway engineers have many difficulties to encounter, some of them more amusing to read about than to experience. Of one such difficulty, the following story is told:

"A freight train was lumbering along, when a big elephant came out of the woods and undertook to butt the engine off the track. The engineer did not like to charge the brute, for fear of an upset, and several times reversed the engine, in the vain hope that the elephant would take that as a sign of surrender, and retire.

"Finally the elephant backed into the engine, and, setting its forefeet firmly between the rails, endeavoured to push the train backward with its hind-quarters.

"The engineer promptly put on all steam, toppled the elephant over a small embankment, and before it could recover its senses, the train passed on."

E. R.

Where Ignorance is Bliss:

A PARTY of seven excursionists from the vicinity of Manchester were, a few weeks since, perambulating about the shore at Seacombe, opposite Liverpool, and, seeing several flats and schooners lying high and dry on the beach, the tide being out at the time, one of the party turned round to a friend of his and said:

"I say, Bill, how do them there fellows get their vessels down in th' water?"

"Can't say," was the response.

"Well," returned Bill, "I'll know afore I go whoam to-need."

On the party went, and at last, on coming to a schooner where one of the seamen was seated at the stern, Bill, to satisfy his curiosity, goes up and thus interrogates the sailor:

"I say, maister, how d'ye manage to get vessel into water?"

"Why, we don't put the schooner into the water; the water comes up to her."

Bill chuckled and, placing the tip of his thumb to the end of his proboscis, roared out:

"Gammon! thou'rt not old enough to joke us Manchester fowk."

A. W. H.

Well, Have You Done the "Twenty Teazer"?

.....

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CAN YOU DO IT?

CAN YOUR FRIENDS DO IT?

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Teazed a Teazed Public.*

.....

It is not much to look at. You would think there was nothing in it. You would think you could do it on your head in the dark. But you can't.

You sit down at a table after tea with the "Twenty Teazer" in front of you, and you say to your wife, "Now, just time me, and see how quickly I can do this alleged 'Teazer!'" And then you begin.

About two in the morning your wife comes down in her dressing-gown with a candle to find you grovelling on the ground with your coat off and your collar undone, hunting round for the fifth square block of wood which you are convinced must have been in the box.

But you are wrong; there are only four, and the "Teazer" can be untazed.

One point, however, you should bear in mind, that it is not necessary for the numerals to be all facing the same way. Some of them may be upside down, others may be end on, just as you fancy.

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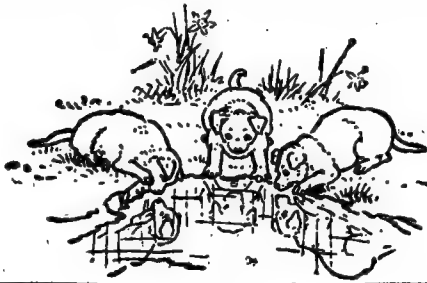
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WAS
IT



A
FAILURE?

"It is just like a Beauty and the Beast, only the pity is—there is no Beast!"

The remark and the complaint were made by rather a plain young girl below a wall overhung with a mass of red and pink roses. There was an air of romance about the garden, where she was wandering alone, although it was only the garden of a hotel; but then the hotel was in Italy, the land of romance. It was growing late for the lake season; the crowd of English visitors had gone by; the heat was becoming fierce; people hurried off by the passes to the cool snowy uplands of Switzerland.

In all the Grand Hotel de Bellagio there were only two people left. Their names, as they called each other, were "Auntie" and "Hetty"; or, as they were written up on the hall-board, "Mrs. Kerrhurst, Angleterre; Miss Douglas, Angleterre."

There was a certain charm in finding that the whole place—the great spacious hotel, with its salons and verandahs, its wide marble stairs and corridors, its gardens lying along the lakeside with seats and shady walks—was at their sole disposal.

For, if the evening steamboats happened to bring a few travellers—some Russians, some German-American Jews, a German bridal pair—the boat, early the following morning, was generally certain to take them all away again, and leave the place empty during the hot still day.

Hetty often thought, as they sat down to their solitary breakfast of a morning in the long stately *salle-à-manger*, with its polished floors and carved and panelled walls, with its vast windows, which let in the scent from the magnolia-trees, and its suite of unemployed servants waiting listlessly about—she often thought it was like living in a fairy tale, where there was a palace all in readiness, but whose owner never appeared.

"That is the worst of it," she complained. "It is very nice being alone, auntie, but I must say I should like to see the Beast."

To which "Auntie" would respond: "Perhaps when he comes he will complain he can see no Beauty."

Mrs. Kerrhurst, who had lived in India, maintained that the secret in hot weather is to keep the shutters and windows closed, so she spent her days in her room at the back of the house, but Hetty, despite her aunt's deprecations that she was growing hopelessly sunburnt, preferred descending the broad terrace-steps, crossing the *parterre*, aglow with all-coloured flowers, and wandering about with her books under the leafy colonnade by the lakeside. She never tired of watching the wonderful changes which passed over the mountains, whose velvet-like green slopes rose sheer out of the water, nor of noting the lights and shadows over the distant snow-crowned peaks.

One day "the Beast" appeared. Hetty found him in

possession of her favourite seat—the little corner bower in the uppermost path of the garden, where a yellow jasmine strewed its blossoms on the ground. There was no mistaking his nationality—it was "Milord Anglais" every inch. Age, apparently over fifty; an iron-grey moustache, keen, severe grey eyes, a forehead furrowed with melancholy lines, an expression both sad and savage.

That was the vision which from henceforth haunted the garden and salons. He was always alone, never spoke to anyone, always looked miserable and defiant. At *table d'hôte* he sat silent and rigid between some noisy foreigners, or generally he dined at a little side table alone. But Hetty was not repelled.

"I should like to make him look a little happy," she said. And she undertook the mission.

From that time the waiters—according to whose caprice people are either thrown together or kept apart at the *tables d'hôte*—ruled that the seats of the three English people should be placed side by side. And from the informal introduction: "Will you pass the salt, please?" Hetty made her starting-point. At first she met with anything but brilliant success. Colonel Wyse (as his name was registered on the hall-board) met her advances with chill sternness.

His answers were not so much blunt or brusque as grimly indifferent. He did not admire the lake scenery; he did not call it hot; he did not think much of Bellagio; he did not like Italy or anything Italian; it was quite a mistake of Hetty's to consider it a matter of regret that no more English arrived; it was a still greater mistake to imagine that foreigners were better than nobody; he hated foreigners; he detested the scent of magnolias, and wished that all the trees might die; he considered nightingales a downright plague, and had risen in the night to fling a piece of soap out of the window, which had gained him the satisfaction of dislodging twelve from one bush.

Everything he said was as though it were forced unwillingly from him. A shy person would soon have been discouraged; conversation must have flagged had it depended on him; but Hetty chattered unceasingly. She was not long in discovering that the Engineer Colonel, notwithstanding his haughty, forbidding mien, was in reality possessed by a certain shyness not uncommon to the corps; but, being one of those shy people who are the very last to own to it, he had grown accustomed to cover his shyness with an air of savageness. Most who met him were afraid of him; he had no friends; he travelled about for his health from place to place, lonely, *blasé*, discontented, suffering. The bright girl with the sunny smile at Bellagio, who insisted on making him talk, was a wonderful exception to the general rule of acquaintances, who, however

sociably disposed, always ended in giving up their efforts as quite hopeless. But Hetty talked and laughed on—never sought for subjects suitable to his gravity—chattered away about the merest, most frivolous girlish trifles—anything that came uppermost; showed him her hands tanned to nut-brown by the morning's row; asked his advice what to do with them; consulted him on the colour of a silk scarf she intended to purchase; described a "spoony" scene she had witnessed in the arbour between a demonstrative German bridal couple. It was like sunshine on ice. A thaw set in—day by day the morose engineer relaxed, listened, grew interested in the girl as a comical study, was known to smile grimly, left off saying sarcastic things, grew less cynical and more gracious. Hetty began to be triumphant. The look of melancholy changed to something more like happiness when she was near.

She thought it a great discovery when she found out there were two things he liked—one was music, the other was tea—but he never met with either to his taste, so he said. However, Hetty's playing seemed to please him, for every evening, when she sat down to the piano in the empty public *salon*, he brought his cigar to the seat nearest the door, just outside in the verandah, and smoked there in the summer twilight so long as the music continued.

Hetty played as she talked—on and on—and never expected polite observations between whiles, such as "That is very pretty; who is the composer of that piece?" She seemed to play for herself more than for outsiders; no one was expected to listen unless he liked.

"I do not believe anybody can make better tea than I can," announced Hetty confidently. And the next rainy day there came a knock at Colonel Wyse's room, where he was spending a cheerless afternoon, and the *femme de chambre* of the stage presented a cup of hot, fragrant tea, with the compliments of the ladies of No. 14.

Quite a sweet smile accompanied the thanks for that cup of tea the next time they met. Then came an invitation to see the tea made; and at five o'clock one day Colonel Wyse found a welcome to Mrs. Kerrhurst's private *salon*, where Hetty was busy with spirits of wine and an Etna-lump.

"This is the primitive way in which we do things abroad," said Hetty, with a wave of a solitary spoon towards two cups set out without any saucers, and a tiny china teapot with a broken handle. "This is my pet little old teapot which I bought in the market at Verona once. It is of no use carrying saucers; they take up too much room, and always get broken in the packing. We take turns with the spoon; it is the only one my aunt's butler would allow us to bring from home. But, oh! dear, I did not know we had eaten all the last *pane dolce*. Wait a minute; I will be back directly."

And Hetty snatched her hat and ran out of the room, leaving her aunt to ring for another cup and spoon, and to talk to Colonel Wyse about India and the people they mutually remembered there.

In a few minutes, indeed, back came Hetty breathless, bearing in triumph what she called a *pane dolce*—a round light cake with raisins.

"Do you patronise that quaint little baker's shop under the arcades, Colonel Wyse? That is where I have been. I told the woman I could not wait for paper and string, and had brought no *centesimi*. She always says '*Fa niente*.' Now the tea is ready."

Colonel Wyse thought it the pleasantest tea-party he had ever known, and all the better for the absence of silver equipage and liveried footman, and the state and formality of an English drawing-room. But it must have been the sociable charms of the tea-maker and his hostess which made the real difference.

"Hetty has set her heart on rowing to San Giovanni by moonlight," said Mrs. Kerrhurst. "The moon does not rise until ten o'clock; if you would not think that too late, and would care to finish your cigar on the water, we shall be very glad."

It was not at all the sort of thing in the Colonel's "line."

"What difference does it make in a place whether the moon or the sun is shining?" he inquired of Hetty at that evening's *table d'hôte*, when she alluded in joyous raptures to the prospect.

"Oh, if you do not know, I am afraid I cannot explain," she answered, a little puzzled; "except," she added lucidly—"except that it is the difference between sunlight and moonlight. Besides, the moon makes everything look so romantic."

"Ah, all romance was knocked out of me long ago."

"Oh, what a pity!" said the young girl, looking so sorry for him.

It may have been that he found it refreshing to watch the fresh glow of romance in somebody young and happy; at any rate, he was in the boat, which glided over the moonlight water, by garden walls overhung with roses, and by ilex copses where the nightingales sang, until it reached the broad, weird flight of stone stairs, bordered by cypresses, leading up the hill from the village of San Giovanni; and if the musical clang of the bells from the church campanile was nothing but a common sound to him, it may yet have been a pleasant change to be with one to whom they spoke the purest poetry.

Days and nights passed—a month flew—and Colonel Wyse, who had intended staying only a few days, still lingered on at Bellagio. They were happier days than he had known for many years—so happy that it was becoming dangerous. Circumstances threw the three English people very often together. A wonderful new feeling began to make its way into the self-hardened heart of the man who had grown accustomed to find this world a rough, cold place. At first he looked upon it as a mere madness, a wild impossibility; but the feeling forced its own way, and for a little while he indulged it.

Suddenly an influx of other English arrived at the hotel. They were a large party of mostly young people, all of whom proved to be friends of Mrs. Kerrhurst's and of Hetty's. They absorbed Hetty. All day—at the *tables d'hôte*, in the garden, on the water, in the veranda—she was surrounded by some of them. They were all so young and so happy; and the poor old Colonel, looking on, began to feel old and unhappy again. He never felt so old or so unhappy as when he saw a certain Alan Thornton helping Hetty in and out of the boats, laughing and talking with her under the trees.

"It is natural, quite natural," thought he, resigning himself to the loss of Hetty's companionship, and never for a moment guessing of the comparison Hetty, in her own mind, was making between some young men and some older men, nor how strongly she decided that the empty-headed class, who could talk of nothing but balls and theatres and races, were a great mistake; and that others who had "lived," and who possessed brains

and sense, were far more to be admired and appreciated. Often, in the midst of Mr. Thornton's light rattling talk, she remembered with regret one of Colonel Wyse's blunt speeches.

"You must miss your friends," said Colonel Wyse, when they all departed, and Hetty's chair was once more moved up next his.

"Ye-es," said Hetty, "I shall miss the girls; but it is pleasant to have the place to ourselves again, I think. It seems like old times to be sitting at this end of the table again."

Her undisguised pleasure at that fact was not lost upon her neighbour.

The next day he said abruptly:

"I am going to England to-morrow."

It was a surprising piece of news; for it had been a long-settled thing that he and they should meet again in August, since both were bound for the same place in Switzerland. There was apparently no urgent reason for such a reversal of plans. He only said he had changed his mind; and if Mrs. Kerrhurst and Hetty had known Colonel Wyse better, they would have been aware that that was a thing he had rarely done in the course of his life before.

They were sorry; they had grown accustomed to their quaint companion and friend, whom, in the privacy of their own rooms, Hetty still called "the Beast," but she used the name as a term of affection.

"If there is anything I can do for you in London I hope you will let me know," said Colonel Wyse, as he gave the address of his club to Mrs. Kerrhurst, who, with Hetty, was remaining on the Continent for another year. Mrs. Kerrhurst happened to say something about the pleasantness of returning home to England, and to the welcome of friends. "I have no friends who will be glad to see me, nobody cares whether I am in the country or out of it." It was said so sadly that it wrung Hetty's heart with pity. "After all, my mission has failed." She sighed to herself, for since many days she had observed that all the sad lines had come back, that the face wore a look of greater suffering than even before.

"Good-bye," said he, with one firm grip of her hand as the steamboat came plying across the lake from the opposite shore, and he managed to smile as he said it. But Hetty's face had lost all smiles. Passengers and luggage were conveyed on board from the little pier at the garden gates; the ropes were loosened and thrown on land, "A colico?" sounded the peculiarly accented familiar shout, and the boat pushed off. Hetty stood among the roses on the terrace and waved a farewell.

"Might I have succeeded?" Colonel Wyse asked himself afterwards, as he remembered her face, from which the sunshine had fled.

Good, generous old "Beast." Rather than put her to the test—rather than sacrifice one so young and bright—he, who was so much older, so broken down in health and dismal, had resolved that he would go away before his feelings should deepen—would go away and leave her to a better fate.

Of course, he never guessed what a dreary place Hetty found the beautiful garden by the lakeside after he had gone, and how "unwarrantably sorry" (as she called it to herself) she felt for the next few days.

"I can never forget your kindness at Bellagio. I am going to try the climate of Algiers for the winter," said a letter dated from the United Service Club, which was received by Mrs. Kerrhurst in the following autumn.

Before the winter was ended Hetty had given her heart to someone who, to her mind, combined youth, and brains, and fun, and every other charm to be desired.

They were married in London during the season and went to Italy for their honeymoon.

"What are you reading?" Hetty's husband asked one morning.

Hetty was absorbed in an open letter, over which she had begun to laugh softly, and had just exclaimed, with fervent warmth, "I am glad—so very glad." In answer to the question, she looked up and explained.

"It is a letter inclosed by auntie. Come and read it too. It is from a friend auntie and I once made in our travels. He has written to her. He was lonely and very miserable. I tried to cheer him, but in the end I quite, quite failed."

The foreign letter-paper was principally filled with a long, well-written description of Algiers. The writer hoped Mrs. Kerrhurst and "Miss Douglas" were well—he was feeling much better himself. At the very end of the letter he said there was a small item of intelligence he wished to tell them—he was going to be married. To this bare news was added no detail whatsoever—only a few half-apologetic remarks; he feared that in his frail state of health it might be thought unfair, but he had not acted without full consideration, and he was weary of the selfish, profitless life he had been leading.

"It is the very best thing for him that could possibly have happened," wrote Hetty to Mrs. Kerrhurst; "but I must say it is the most surprising thing, and the last thing I should ever have expected to hear. I always thought he was a confirmed 'old bachelor.' Try to find out who his wife is to be and what she is like."

But there was no one to ask—there was no one who knew more about him than they knew themselves. All they could ever hear was through the same friends who had been at Bellagio. They once told Hetty they had met "her old beau" at Montreux, travelling with a wife who, although not a child like herself, was still young compared to him, but that he had become surprisingly young again himself, and looked surprisingly happy.

Hetty never found their descriptions of the wife satisfying to her curiosity. It is easy to say that So-and-so is "fair," "tall," "slight," "rather pretty," "seems to be musical"; but the same adjectives apply to other people, and out of them Hetty could not frame to her fancy a living character. She could only feel glad there was some one to make the lonely life happy at last.

As the years went by, Hetty quite lost sight of her strange friend of those few summer weeks on the Lake of Como; but she remembered him and them together, and it was with a touch of real regret that she heard, not long since, of his death. But she likes to think that the end had been brightened, and that in the final failing of strength, there had been one near with the right and power to help. She had longed to make him happier; and although she still believes that it was "quite, quite a failure," she rejoices that, in a better way than any she could ever have planned, a happier time did come.

But "auntie" has her own thoughts. She feels sure that one thing led to another—that the generous earnest efforts of those summer days were not thrown away—that it was an unconscious girl's sunny influence which had won a way through the fast-locked door of a heart which had isolated itself from all life's sweet links, and that it was the same influence which unintentionally had raised a longing for a better state, which afterwards was sought and found.

ELEANOR L. DE BUTTS.

How a Child Was Illegally Patented.

SOME time last winter a lady, whom we will call Mrs. Smith, took her little girl, aged four, with her to make a call on Mrs. Robinson, her near neighbour. Mrs. Robinson was busy in her kitchen, where she received her visitor with her usual cordiality.

There was a large fire blazing in the stove, and while the ladies were excitedly discussing the new bonnet of the local Methodist minister's wife, the little girl imprudently sat down on the stove-hearth. She was instantly convinced that the stove-hearth was exceedingly hot, and on loudly mentioning the fact was rescued by her mother and carried home for medical treatment.

A few days later Mrs. Smith burst in great excitement into the office of a young lawyer, and with tears and lamentations disclosed to him the fact that her child was indelibly branded with the legend, "Patented, September, 1892."

These words, in raised letters, had happened to occupy just that part of the stove-hearth upon which the child had seated herself, and, being heated almost to red-heat, they had reproduced themselves upon the surface of the unfortunate child.

The lawyer entered into the mother's sorrow with much sympathy, but, after he had in some degree calmed her mind, he informed her that a breach of the law had been committed.

"Your child," he remarked, "has never been patented, but she is, nevertheless, marked, 'Patented, September, 1892.' This is an infringement of the statute. You falsely represent by that brand that a child for whom no patent was ever issued is patented. This false representation is forgery, and subjects you to the penalties made and provided for that crime."

Mrs. Smith was, as may be supposed, greatly alarmed at hearing this statement, and her first impulse was to beg the young man to save her from a convict's cell. With a gravity suited to the occasion, he explained the whole law of patents. He told her that had she desired to patent the child she should have either constructed drawings with specifications, showing distinctly what parts of the child she claimed to have invented.

The model, or these drawings, she should have forwarded to the Patent Office, and she would then have received in due time a patent—provided, of course, the child was really patentable—and would have been authorised to label it, "Patented."

"Unfortunately," he pursued, "it is now too late to take this course, and we must boldly claim that a patent was issued, and has been in some unaccountable way lost in the Patent Office."

This suggestion cheered the spirits of Mrs. Smith, but they were again lowered by the further remarks of the young man. He reminded her that the child might find it very inconvenient to be patented.

"If we claim," he went on to say, "that she had been regularly patented, it follows that the ownership of the patent, including the child herself, belongs to you, and

will pass at your death into the possession of your heirs. Holding this patent, they can prevent any husband from taking possession of the girl by marriage, and they can sell, assign, transfer, and set over the patent-right and the accompanying girl to any purchaser.

"If she is sold to a speculator, or to a joint-stock company, she will find her position a most unpleasant one. To sum up the case, madam, either your child is patented or she is not. If she is not patented, you are guilty of forgery. If she is patented, she is an object of barter and sale, or, in other words, a chattel."

This was certainly a wretched state of things, and Mrs. Smith, in order to ease her mind, began to abuse Mrs. Robinson, whose stove had branded the unfortunate little girl. She loudly insisted that the whole fault rested with Mrs. Robinson, and demanded to know if the latter could not be punished.

The young man, who was immensely learned in the law, thereupon began a new argument. He said that where there is a wrong there must be a remedy.

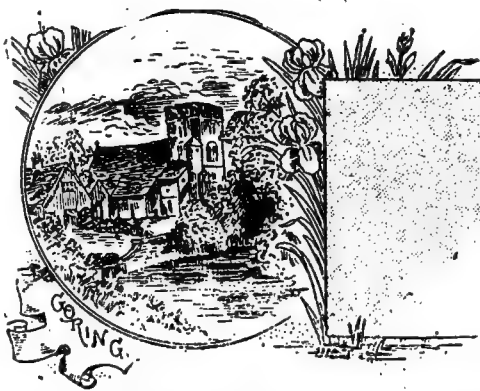
"Mrs. Robinson," he continued, "by means of her stove has done you a great wrong. In accordance with the maxim, *Qui facit per alium facit per se*, Mrs. Robinson, and not the stove, is the party from whom you must demand redress. She has wickedly and maliciously branded your child, and thus rendered you liable for an infringement of the patent law.

"It is my opinion, madam, that an action for assault, and an action for libel will both lie against Mrs. Robinson, and that there is also ground for having her indicted for procurement of forgery."

Finally, after much further argument, the lawyer advised Mrs. Smith to apply to a magistrate and procure the arrest and punishment of Mrs. Robinson. Accordingly, Mrs. Smith applied to a magistrate, who, after vainly trying to comprehend the case, and to find out what was the precise crime alleged against Mrs. Robinson, compromised the matter by unofficially asking that lady to appear before him.

When both the ladies were in court, Mrs. Smith, prompted by the clerk, put in her complaint in the shape of a charge that Mrs. Robinson had feloniously branded the youthful Smith girl. The latter was then marked, "Exhibit A," and formally put in evidence, and both complainant and defendant told their respective stories. The result was that the court, in a very able and voluminous opinion, decided that nobody was guilty of anything, but that with a view of avoiding the penalty of infringing the patent law, Mrs. Smith must apply to Parliament for a special Act, declaring the child legally and regularly patented. If Parliament finds time to attend to this important matter, little Miss Smith will be the first girl ever patented, and the legal profession in all English-speaking countries will watch with unflagging interest the lawsuits to which in future any infringement of the patent may lead.

W. E. PARSONS.



- A - REGULAR MESS.

SOME six years back in the beautiful village of Minoge, an old lady kept the big tea-house of the place known as the "White Pine."

Minoge is situated at the base of the holy mountain Oyama, and during the months of August and September trade in Minoge was always brisk, on account of the influx of pilgrims from all parts of Japan, who came hither to perform the holy duty of ascending the mountain, and of paying their devours at the shrine of the Thunder-God, previous to making the grand pilgrimage of Fuji-Yama.

The old lady was well off, and her inn bore an unblemished reputation of possessing the prettiest serving-girls, the gayest guest-chambers, and the primest stewed eels—the dish *par excellence* of Japanese gourmets—of any hostelry in the country side. One of her daughters was married in Yeddo, and a son was studying in one of the European colleges of that city; still she was as completely rustic and unacquainted with the march of affairs outside as if she had never heard of Yeddo, much less of foreigners. At that time it was a very rare thing indeed, for a foreigner to be seen in Minoge, and the stray artists and explorers who had wandered there were regarded much in the same way as would have been so many white elephants.

It caused, therefore, no little excitement in the village when, one fine autumn evening, the rumour came along that a foreigner was making his way towards the "White Pine."

Everyone tried to get a glimpse of him. The chubby-cheeked boys and girls at school threw down their books and pens, and crowded to the door and windows; the bath-house was soon empty of its patrons and patronesses, who, red as lobsters with boiling water, and dishevelled locks and garments hastily bound round them, formed line outside; the very Yakunin, or mayor, sentenced a prisoner he was judging straight off, without bothering himself to inquire into evidence, so as not to be balked of the sight, and every wine and barber's shop sent forth its quota of stagers into the little street.

Meanwhile the foreigner was leisurely striding along. He was taller by far than the tallest man in Minoge, his hair was fair, and even his bronzed face and hands were fair compared to those of the natives. On the back of his head was a felt wide-awake, he wore a blue jacket and blue half-trousers (*Anglice*, knickerbockers), thick hose, and big boots. In his mouth was a pipe—being much shorter than Japanese smoking tubes—in his hand a stick, and on his back a satchel.

As he passed, one or two urchins, bolder than the rest, shouted out "Tojin baka" ("Foreign beast") and instantly fled indoors, or behind their mothers' skirts;

but the majority of the villagers simply stared, with an occasional interjection expressive of wonder at his height, fair hair, and costume.

At the door of the "White Pine" he halted, unstrapped his bundle, took off his boots, and in very fair Japanese requested to be shown to his room. The old lady, after a full ten minutes' posturing, complimenting, bowing, and scraping, ushered him into her best guest-chamber. "For," she said, "being a foreigner, he must be rich, and wouldn't like ordinary pilgrim accommodation." And she drew to the sliding screens, and went off to superintend his repast. Although nothing but the foreigner's boots were to be seen outside, a gaping crowd had collected, striving to peer through the cracks in the doors, and regarding the boots as if they were infernal machines. One, more enterprising than the rest, took a boot up, passed it to his neighbour, and in a short time it had circulated from hand to hand throughout the population of Minoge, and was even felt and pinched by the mayor himself, who replaced it with the reverence due to some religious emblem or relic.

Then the hostess served up her banquet—seaweed, sweets, raw "tighe"—the salmon of Japan—in slices, garnished with turnips and horse-radish, egg soup with pork lumps floating in it, chicken delicately broiled, together with a steaming bottle of her choicest "San Toku Shiu," or wine of the Three Virtues (which keeps out the cold, appeases hunger, and induces sleep).

The foreigner made an excellent meal, eked out by his own white bread, and wine from a flask of pure silver, then, lighting his pipe, reclined at full length on the mats, talking to the old lady and her three damsels, O Hana, O Kiku, and O Riu (Miss Flower, Miss Chrysanthemum, and Miss Dragon). He was walking about the country simply for pleasure, he said—which astonished the women greatly—he had been away from Yokohama three weeks, and was now on his road to the big mountain.

The party were soon screaming with laughter at his quaint remarks, and at his occasional colloquial slips, and in a short time all were such good friends that the old lady begged him to display the contents of his satchel.

"Certainly," said the stranger, pulling it towards him and opening it.

A dirty flannel shirt or two didn't produce much impression—perhaps wares of a similar nature had been imported before into Minoge—nor did a hairbrush, toothbrush, and comb; but when he pulled out a pistol, which was warranted to go off six times in as many seconds, and proceeded to exemplify the same in the air, popular excitement began to assert itself in a series of "naruhodas" ("really!")

Then he pulled a portable kerosene lamp (kerosene lamps are now as common in Japan as shrines by the road side) and the light it made, throwing entirely into the shade the native "andon," or oil wick, burning close by, raised the enthusiasm still higher. Lastly, he showed a small box of medicines, "certain cures," said he, "for every disease known amongst the sons of men."

The old lady and maids were enchanted, and matters ended, after much haggling and disputation, in the foreigner allowing them to keep the three articles for the sum of fifty dollars—about fifteen pounds sterling—which was handed over to him, after which who called for his bedding and went fast to sleep.

The first thing for the old lady to do the next day was to present herself and maids in full holiday costume with their recent purchases at the house of the mayor. The great man received them and their goods with the dignity befitting his rank, and promised that a public trial should be made of the pistol, lamp and medicines, at an early date, in order to determine whether they were worthy to be adopted as institutions in the village.

Accordingly, by proclamation, at a fixed date and hour, all Minoge assembled in the open space facing the mayor's house, and the articles were brought forth. The pistol was first taken and loaded as directed by the foreigner, by the boldest and strongest man in the village. The first shot was fired—it wounded a packhorse, standing some twenty yards away, in the leg; he took fright and bolted with a heavy load of wine tubs down the street into the fields; the second shot went through a temple roof opposite, and shattered the head of the deity in the shrine; the third shot perforated the bamboo hat of a pilgrim; and it was decided not to test the remaining three barrels.

Then the lamp was brought forth; the wick was turned up full, and the village man applied a light. The blaze of light was glorious, and drew forth acclamations of the crowd; but the wick had been turned up too high, the glass burst with a tremendous report, the strong man dropped the lamp, the oil ignited, ran about and set fire to the matting. In ten minutes, however, the local fire brigade got the flames under, and the experiments proceeded.

The medicine packets were brought forth. The first was a grey powder. A man who had been lame from youth upwards was made to limp out. The powder mixed with water, according to directions, was given him. He hobbled away in frightful convulsions, and nearly injured his whole limb in so doing.

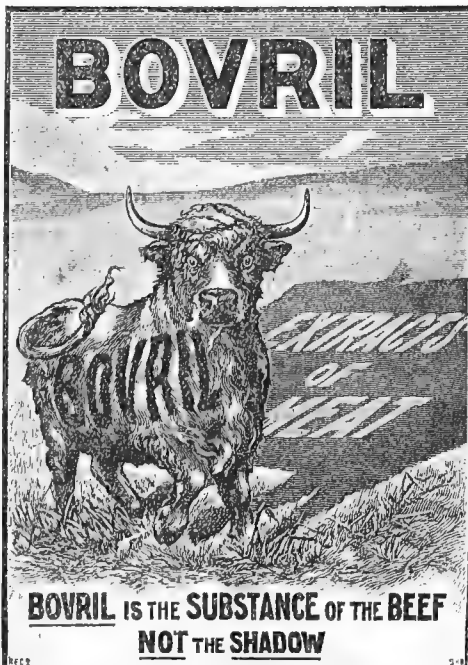
The second packet was then unsealed—it contained pills. A blind man was called out, six pills were rammed down his throat, and he was left wallowing in a ditch.

The third packet, a small book containing sticking-plaster, was then introduced. A burly peasant, a victim to fearful toothache, was made to stand forth. The interior of his mouth was lined with the plaster, and when he attempted in his disgust to pull it off, away came his skin also.

The medicines were condemned *nem. con.*

The foreigner returned, asked how matters had gone, and was told in polite but firm terms that his machines were not suited to the people of Minoge. Wherefore he returned the fifty dollars to the old lady of the "White Pine," and went away laughing. Minoge subsided into its ordinary every-day groove of life, and it was not until some years after that the inhabitants became better used to pistols, lamps, and European medicines.

FRANK ABELL.



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The Value of a £10 Note.

It was Saturday afternoon, and Mrs. Moore was tidying up the kitchen for her husband's return from the City. Their home was a small house in a narrow street, but the autumn sunshine beamed in at the little window through the broad, brown leaves and scarlet flowers of a begonia, and the table was spread with a snowy cloth; a green glass vase filled with crimson and yellow dahlias was in the centre.

Mrs. Moore was fond of bright colours and cheerful things. She was a pretty young woman, with large, dark eyes, thick, waving brown hair, and a firm mouth and chin. She had come, an orphan, from a country home to lodgings in the City and to a post behind the "fancy counter" in Messrs. Rawlins and Cosgrove's.

Going to and from her work she had met with strange regularity a certain fair young man with large blue eyes. She thought he looked as if he had come, like herself, from the country, and she grew to feel a friendly interest in him. The street seemed, somehow, empty in the chill morning hours if she did not see his tall figure swinging along. They met at the house of one of her friends—they had no relatives to counsel wisdom—and, after a brief wooing, they rushed into unconsidered marriage without much visible means of support.

He was bookkeeper to a wealthy druggist in the City, but his salary was small, and called for the closest economy. He would have liked to see his pretty, dainty wife in a suburban cottage among the flowers she loved and with congenial neighbours, but he could afford only the little house in Mendip Street. The neighbours there looked askance at the young couple, and shook their heads as they peeped in at the pots of flowers and the kitchen, so spotless with its hearthrug and easy chairs. They knew, poor souls, the depressing hand of poverty, and how courage ebbs, and dainty ways change to slatternly under its icy touch.

Mrs. Moore sang to herself that afternoon for she felt in good spirits. Jim had bought her a new dress and an autumn mantle, and he had planned to take her a trip to the seaside, for the doctor said she should have change of air.

She had just begun to dust carefully a little china dog that sat on the chimney-piece when a familiar step sounded on the cobble stones of the street, and Jim came in and clasped her in his arms. He was her lover still though he had been nine months her husband. She looked at him keenly: something was wrong. The instinct of love had noted a weariness in his step and something wanting in the greeting.

"Are you ill, Jim?" she asked anxiously. "What has happened?"

He flung himself into a chair with a smothered groan, his lips quivered under his fair moustache, and he rested

his elbows on his knees and buried his face in his hands.

"The worst has happened, Grace," he said in a dreary tone.

She turned pale as death, for she was not strong, and the shock was almost too much for her: but she was a dauntless little woman, and the braver of the two, so she laid her hand on his shoulder, giving it an impatient shake.

"Tell me, Jim—tell me at once," she commanded. "I can bear anything but to see you give way like that."

And with sobs and broken words he told the tale. He had wanted so much to give her a treat of some sort. Life was so dull for her in that sordid street, but there was no money past the daily needs. A fellow in the shop had made a lucky speculation and could put him in the way to do the same if only he had the money.

A gentleman had come in to pay an account of ten pounds. He had been in a hurry, gave the bookkeeper the money, and would not wait for a receipt. Moore turned up the books to mark the bill paid, but by some strange oversight, probably in a brief absence of his, the account had not been entered. A sudden temptation seized him. Ten pounds would do so much—a new dress for Grace, and, if that tip of Morton's proved a hit, a seaside outing for her. He hesitated, listening for a moment to his better angel, and then—he pocketed the money.

As ill-luck would have it an old clerk of Mr. Haslam's had guessed the transaction. He hinted it to his master, and Jim had been sent for that morning. Mr. Haslam was a rigid, upright man, with a strong regard for money and an indisposition to lose it. His heart smote him a little as he looked at the young face, grown so deathly pale, and the weak, trembling mouth, but he spoke sternly:

"If you can produce that ten pounds by Monday morning you may return to the office, for it may be that you have succumbed to some sudden temptation; but if not, you are dismissed from my employment."

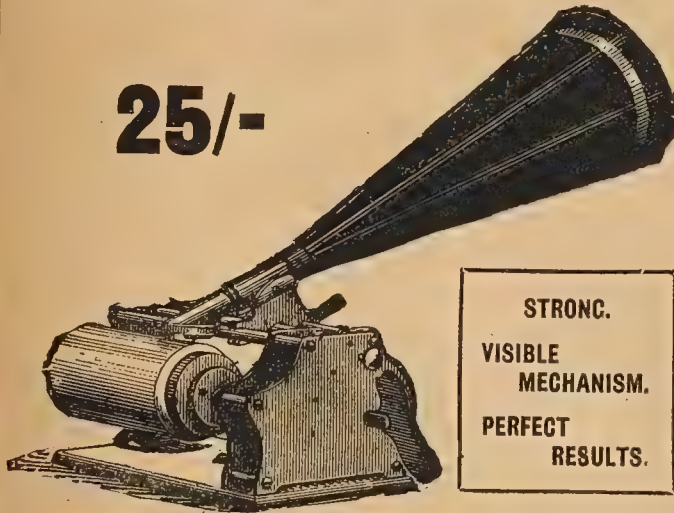
Mr. Haslam was a wise man. It was better to make him produce the money rather than make the matter public property in the police courts.

Slow, hot tears fell from Jim Moore's eyes as the story ended. There was silence in the little kitchen for a time save for the ticking of the gay gilded clock on the chimney-piece, a wedding present from Jim's friends in the shop.

"And so, Grace," he said at last, "you see we are ruined. Of course, I meant to pay it back by degrees; it was only a loan. I tried to tell him so, but he would not listen; he must have it back or I must go. It would 'prove a salutary lesson,' he said. Probably," he added recklessly, "the last I shall ever learn."

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WORTH A CROWN A DOSE.



She stooped and kissed his burning brow.

"Why, Jim, we have each other, and we shall find a way out of this. You—you have some left, have you not?"

"No, Grace. I gave it to Morton, and now it seems this great bit of his is not going to come off for me."

"I am not sorry for that, dear. I would rather bear poverty than see you a gambler."

She looked round the kitchen. Her country training had imbued her with a horror of the pawn-office, but at all risks Jim must be saved.

"Paper, mem!" said a shrill voice at the door. It was the newsboy with the early edition of the halfpenny newspaper. She took it from him, giving it to her husband. He always read the news over his dinner, but he flung it aside now impatiently, and it fell on the floor.

She picked it up and folded it; she could not bear to see things lying untidily around. Her eye caught an advertisement in large type, and the fateful words "Ten Pounds." It was a notice of some sports, and one of Pearson's men was to be there with a Ten-Pound Note.

A sudden resolution seized her; she would put providence to the test. Her instinct was keen, and she thought it was a chance worth trying. She said nothing of it to her husband, it might be only raising false hopes; and, if it failed, there was still the pawnshop, and perhaps Mrs. Mooney would go there for her. Poor Mrs. Mooney, with nine children and a drunken husband, was no stranger to that friend in need.

Jim did not eat any of the appetising little dinner she had taken so much trouble to prepare, and when the cloth was removed he complained of a racking headache and went to lie down on the bed. He lay with his face to the wall like Ahab of old, and he took no notice of his wife putting on her outdoor garments. She was not one of those women who dress gaily before marriage and become slatterns after. Her pretty colour had paled, and her dark eyes looked strained and feverish, but her cloak was put on with care, and the little toque that rested on her bright brown hair was as becoming as her deft hands could make it.

Vehicles were rolling in a constant, noisy stream to the scene of the sports. She stopped at a news-shop and bought a copy of *Pearson's Weekly*. The tramcars were full, so she walked on till she reached the play grounds. She stationed herself at a post of observation where she could see all the passers in and out, and there she stood all the chill autumn afternoon.

People looked at her curiously. What was that pretty young woman doing there? they wondered. Waiting for her sweetheart coming out, no doubt. Ah, the old story.

One man, dressed like a gentleman, whispered in her ear. She blushed a burning blush, and a rush of tears came to her eyes. He had the grace to beg her pardon and pass on.

A stout farmer, with a long brown beard, stopped on his homeward way, and alighting from his spring-cart, stood watching the crowd.

"Come away, my dear," he said to her. "This is no place for one like you. I have girls of my own. Tell me where you live and I will drive you home."

But she thanked him gently in refusal. She had noticed several men, anyone of whom might have what she wanted, and she had been on the point of accosting them, but hesitated. She was getting weary and discouraged. After all, it was a wild-goose chase, and Jim

would wonder what had become of her. Just then a man passed her among the crowd. He was in no wise remarkable, but some intuition told her to try him. She held out her paper in front of him.

"Have you the Ten-Pound Note?" she asked.

A burst of laughter from some boys near sent a crimson colour over her pale, tired face.

The man stopped, put his hand in his pocket, drew out something, and handed it to her.

She grasped it eagerly. It was what she had waited for. Jim was saved! A mist came before her eyes, and she felt as if she were fainting. The farmer had been watching her, and he came forward again.

"Now, you will let me drive you home."

She turned to him gratefully and he put her in his spring-cart, wrapping his rug round her knees. It was not his way home, but he was a man who counted it no hardship to do a kind turn to another. She told him as much of her need as she could without betraying her husband, and he wrung her hand so that she winced with pain as he helped her down at her own street. She would not let him drive to the door lest Jim should be frightened.

"Good-bye and good luck to you, missis," said her friend. "Ye're as plucky as ye're han'some, an' there's few men worthy of the like of you."

The strain over, she felt her knees giving way, and she could scarcely reach the bedroom door. She went softly for Jim might be sleeping, and she would not wake him. A low cry of horror burst from her as she thrust the door ajar. He was standing in his shirt sleeves in front of the little mirror that she had draped so neatly with muslin and pink ribbon bows. His eyes were wild, his face ghastly pale, and his throat was bared. In his uplifted hand he held an open razor. She rushed forward and dashed the razor from his grasp. He turned upon her angrily.

"Oh, Jim! Jim!" she cried. "Would you leave me so—alone?" and fell fainting at his feet.

There was panic and anxiety in the Moores' house that night. Mrs. Mooney came in with her motherly solicitude and large knowledge of such a crisis, and ere morning dawned a little life had come into this world of care and sin, flickered a moment, and gone back again to the world of light.

Jim Moore stooped over the little waxen form in the dainty cradle into whose adornment so many loving thoughts had woven themselves, and sobs shook his frame.

"Oh, Grace, darling," he cried, "you have lost your little baby, and I have killed him!"

"No, no. Don't fret, Jim," she said faintly. "I saved my husband."

And then Mrs. Mooney, with strong, common sense, came, and taking him by the shoulders, thrust him out of the room.

"Man, dear," she exclaimed, "where's your wits at all? Do ye mane to lose yer wife as well as yer wean?"

The ten pounds was paid in on Monday morning, and Mr. Haslam, who had some compunction in the matter, took the advice of his old clerk, a man who had himself known poverty and its temptations, and raised Jim Moore's salary. Mr. Haslam was an old bachelor, and he agreed crustily to the clerk's suggestion.

"If the fellow has been the fool to burden himself with a wife at his age," he said, "I need not run the risk of his robbing me to keep her up."

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Tailor designed Reefer Coat and full wide Skirt, in Cheviot Serge, or Costume Coating. Price **10/6** **10/6**; carriage, 6d. Or the Skirt alone, **5/6**; carriage, 5d. Handsome Toque, as sketch, **8/11**; carriage, 6d.

PATTERNS of Cheviot Serge, Costume Coating, and any other fabrics desired, sent post free. **A FULL DRESS** LENGTH of Serge or Coating (6yds. 52ins. wide) for **7/6**; carriage, 8d. **COLOURS.**—Black, Navy, Brown, Myrtle, Fawn, Khaki, Grey, and Royal Blue. **SIZES IN STOCK of Ladies' Costumes** are 34, 36, 38 in. round bust (under arms); Waists, 24, 26, 28 in.; Skirts being 38, 40, 42 in. long in front. Any other sizes made to measure, **1/6** extra.

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FOOTBALL PICTURE PUZZLES.

2nd LIST.

£100 IN PRIZES.

2nd LIST.

1st Prize - - - £50 in Gold.

2nd Prize - - - - £10 Note | 6th to 20th Prizes - 15 Sovereigns
 3rd, 4th, and 5th Prizes - 3 £5 Notes | 21st to 40th Prizes - 20 Half-Sovs.

Below will be found ten pictures; each picture representing the name of a well-known football player.

If you look at the picture in the margin you will see that the name is Maxwell. What are the other names?

Example.

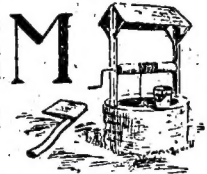
If you cannot find all the names, ask your friends to help you.

All you have to do is to write underneath each picture, in the space provided, the name of the player you believe the picture to represent. Then keep the list by you until TWO other lists have appeared. We will tell you when to send them in.

Each set of four lists must be sent in separate envelopes, and will be considered as different attempts.

Only one solution is allowed under each picture.

Where two men bear the same surname, but different christian names, the christian name or initial is indicated in the picture.



Maxwell.

The prizes will be paid to the competitors from whom we receive the correct, or most nearly correct, solutions.

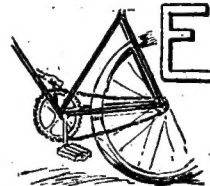
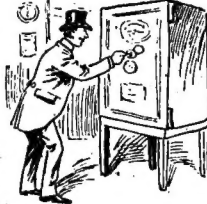
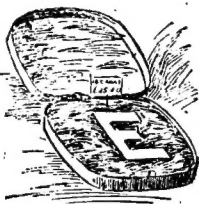
No more than one prize will go to any competitor.

It must be taken as a condition of the competition that anybody competing therein agrees to abide by the Editor's final decision.

Intending competitors in the above would do well to procure a copy of "The Football Who's Who," which contains the names of about a thousand of the best known players. This book will be found of great service in discovering the names depicted. It only costs a shilling, and may be obtained of all booksellers, and post free for 1s. 3d. from the publisher, 17 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.



No. 11..... No. 12..... No. 13..... No. 14..... No. 15.....



No. 16..... No. 17..... No. 18..... No. 19..... No. 20.....

I send in this coupon as a competitor for the prize advertised in this paper, and subject to the conditions printed on this page:

Name and address.....

THINGS TO REMEMBER.

1. Coupons may be sent either from "Pearson's Weekly" or "Short Stories."
2. Do not send in your coupons till we tell you.
3. All coupons are sent at senders' risk, and if they go astray, from whatever cause, we do not accept responsibility.
4. Competitors must attach their private address to their attempts. No prize will be sent to any post-office, refreshment rooms, or other places at which letters are called for. Attempts bearing such addresses will be disqualified.

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or

A Real Gold Ring

Set with **REAL DIAMONDS** and other stones.

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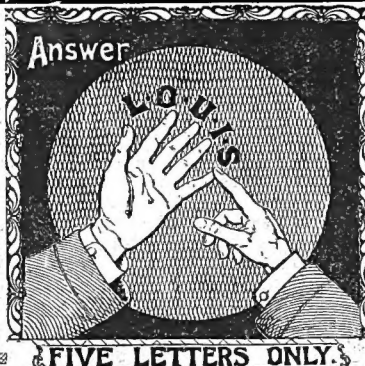
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ANY DOCTOR WILL TELL YOU "there is no better Cough Medicine."—One gives relief; if you suffer from cough try them but once; they will cure, and they will not injure your health; an increasing sale of over 60 years is a certain test of their value. Sold in 191d. tins.

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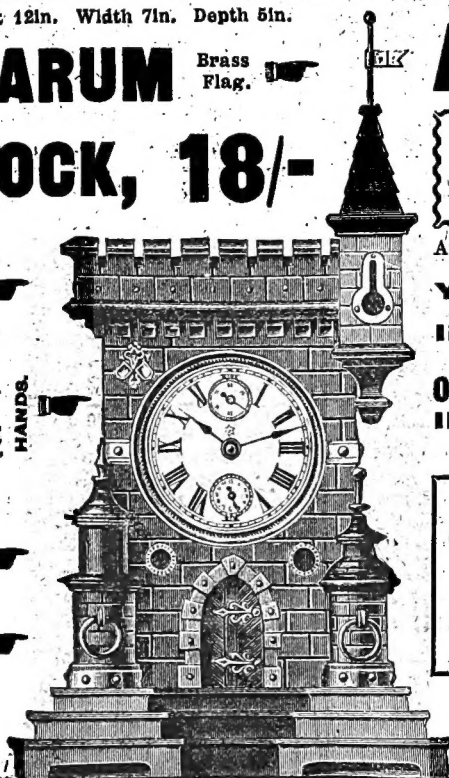
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